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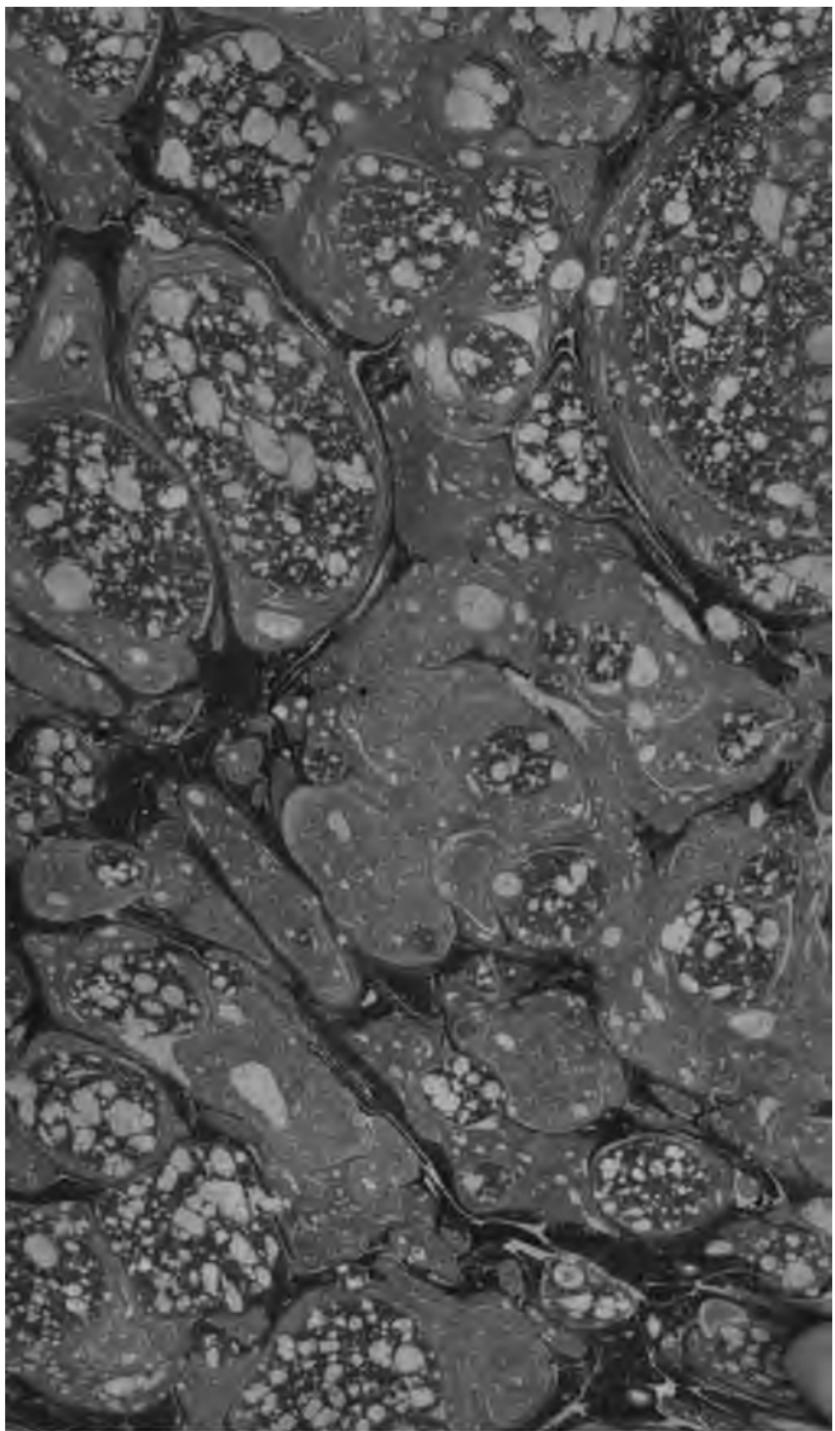
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CAUSE AND CURE

OF A

WOUNDED CONSCIENCE.

BY THOMAS FULLER, D. D.

AUTHOR OF, "THE CHURCH HISTORY OF BRITAIN;" "THE HISTORY OF THE WORTHIES OF ENGLAND," &c. &c.

THE SECOND EDITION,
WITH CORRECTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

"*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?*"—PROV. XVIII. 14.

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OF THE
SEVERAL DIALOGUES.

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TO THE
CHRISTIAN READER.

As one *was not anciently* to want a *wedding garment* at a marriage feast ; so now a days, wilfully to wear gaudy clothes at a funeral, is justly censurable as unsuiting with the occasion. Wherefore, in this sad subject, I have endeavoured to decline all light and luxurious expressions: and if I be found faulty therein, I cry and crave God and the reader pardon. Thus desiring that my pains may prove to the glory of God, thine, and my own edification, I rest,

Thine in Christ Jesus,

THO. FULLER.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE,
AND VIRTUOUS LADY,
FRANCES MANNERS,
COUNTESS OF RUTLAND.

Madam,

By the judicial law of the Jews, if a * servant had children by a wife which was given him by his master, though he himself went forth free in the seventh year, yet his children did remain with his master, as the proper goods of his possession. I ever have been and shall be a servant to that noble family, whence your *honour* is extracted. And of late, in that house I have been wedded to the pleasant embraces of a private life, the fittest *wife* and meetest *helper* that can be provided for a student in troublesome times: and the same hath been bestowed upon me by the bounty of your noble brother, **EDWARD LORD MONTAGUE.** Wherefore what issue soever shall

* Exodus xxi. 4.

result from my mind, by his means most happily married to a retired life, must of due redound to his *honour*, as the sole proprietary of my pains during my present condition. Now this *book* is my eldest offspring, which, had it been a son, (I mean, had it been a work of masculine beauty and bigness) it should have waited as a *page* in dedication to his *honour*. But finding it to be of the weaker sex, little in strength, and low in stature, may it be admitted (*madam*) to attend on your *ladyship*, his *honour's* sister.

I need not mind your *ladyship* how God hath measured outward happiness unto you by the *cubit of the sanctuary*, of the largest size, so that one would be perplexed to wish more than what your *ladyship* doth enjoy. My prayer to God shall be, that, shining as a pearl of grace here, you may shine as a star of glory hereafter. So resteth

Your Honour's,
In all Christian Offices,

THO. FULLER.

Boughton,
y 25, 1646.

THE
CAUSE AND CURE
OF
A WOUNDED CONSCIENCE.

DIALOGUE I.

What a wounded Conscience is, wherewith the Godly and Reprobate may be tortured.

Timotheus. *SEEING the best way never to know a wounded conscience by woeful experience, is speedily to know it by a sanctified consideration thereof: give me, I pray you, the description of a wounded conscience, in the highest degree thereof.*

Philologus. It is a *conscience* frightened at the sight of * sin, and weight of God's wrath,

* Psalm xxxviii. 3.

2

even unto the despair of all pardon *during the present agony.*

Tim. Is there any difference betwixt a broken * spirit and a wounded conscience, in this your acceptance?

Phil. Exceeding much: for a *broken spirit* is to be prayed and laboured for, as the most healthful and happy temper of the soul, letting in as much comfort as it leaks out sorrow for sin: whereas, a *wounded conscience* is a miserable malady of the mind, filling it for the present with despair.

Tim. In this your sense, is not the conscience wounded every time that the soul is smitten with guiltiness for any sin committed?

Phil. God forbid: otherwise his servants would be in a sad condition, as in the case of *David* † smitten by his own heart, for being, (as he thought) overbold with God's *anointed*, in cutting off the skirt of *Saul's* garment; such hurts are presently healed by a *plaster of Christ's blood*, applied by *faith*, and come to that height to be counted and *wounded consciences.*

Tim. Are the godly, as well as the wicked, subject to the malady?

Phil. Yes verily; vessels of honour as well as vessels of wrath in this world, are subject to the knocks and bruises of a wounded conscience. A patient *Job*, pious *David*, faithful *Paul*, may be vexed therewith, no less than a cursed *Cain*, perfidious *Achitophel*, or treacherous *Judas*.

Tim. What is the difference betwixt a wounded conscience in the godly, and in the reprobate?

Phil. None at all; oft times in the parties apprehensions, both, for the time being, conceiving their estates equally desperate; little, if any, in the wideness and anguish of the wound itself, which, for the time, may be as tedious and torturing in the godly, as in the wicked.

Tim. How then do they differ?

Phil. Exceeding much in God's intention, gashing the wicked, as malefactors, out of justice, but lancing the godly, out of love, as a surgeon his patients. Likewise they differ

in the issue and event of the *wound*, which ends in the eternal confusion of the one, but in the correction and amendment of the other.

Tim. *Some have said, that in the midst of their pain, by this mark they may be distinguished, because the godly, when wounded, complain most of their sins, and the wicked of their sufferings.*

Phil. I have heard as much; but dare not lay too much *stress* on this slender sign, (to make it generally true) for fear of failing. For *sorrow for sin*, and *sorrow for suffering*, are oft times so twisted and interwoven in the same person, yea in the same sigh and groan, that sometimes it is impossible for the party himself so to separate and divide them in his own sense and feeling, as to know which proceeds from the one and which from the other. Only the all-seeing *eye* of an infinite God is able to discern and distinguish them.

Tim. *Inform me concerning the nature of wounded consciences in the wicked.*

Phil. Excuse me herein : I remember a passage in * S. Augustine, who enquired what might be the cause that the fall of the angels is not plainly set down in the *Old Testament* with the manner and circumstances thereof, resolves it thus : *God, like a wise surgeon, would not open that wound which he never intended to cure.* Of whose words, thus far I make use, that as it was not according to God's pleasure to restore the devils ; so, it being above man's power to cure a *wounded conscience* in the *wicked*, I will not meddle with that whieh I cannot mend : only will insist on a wounded conscience in God's children, where, by God's blessing, one may be the instrument to give some ease and remedy unto their disease.

* *Angelicum vulnus verus medicus qualiter factum sit indicare noluit, dum illud postea curare non destinavit.*
De mirab. Scrip. lib. 1. c. 2.

DIALOGUE II.

What use they are to make thereof, who neither hitherto were, nor haply hereafter shall be, visited with a wounded Conscience.

Tim. Are all God's children either in their life or at their death, visited with a wounded conscience?

Phil. O no : God invites many with his golden sceptre, whom he never bruises with his rod of iron. Many, neither in their conversion, nor in the sequel of their lives, have ever felt that pain in such a manner and measure as amounts to a wounded conscience.

Tim. Must not the pangs in their travel of birth be painful unto them?

! Painful, but in different degrees.
Blessed Virgin Mary (most hold) was
any pain; as well may that

child be born without sorrow, which is conceived without sin. The women of *Israel* were sprightly and lively, unlike the *Egyptians.** The former, favour, none can have, in their *spiritual travel*; the latter, some receive, who, though other whiles tasting of legal frights and fears; yet God so † preventeth them with his blessings of goodness, that they smart not so deeply therein as other men.

Tim. Who are those whick commonly have such gentle usage in their conversion?

Phil. Generally such who never were notoriously profane, and have had the benefit of godly education from pious parents. In some corporations, the sons of freemen, bred under their fathers in their profession, may set up and exercise their *father's trade*, without ever being bound *apprentices thereunto*. Such children whose *parents* have been citizens of new ‡ *Jerusalem*, and have been bred in the mystery of godliness, oftentimes are entered into religion without any *spirit of*

* Exod. i. 19.

† Psalm xxi. 3.

‡ Gal. iv. 26.—Eph. ii. 19.—Heb. xii. 22.

bondage seizing upon them, a great benefit and rare blessing where God in his goodness is pleased to bestow it.

Tim. *What may be the reason of God's dealing so differently with his own servants, that some of them are so deeply, and others not at all afflicted with a wounded conscience?*

Phil. *Even so Father, because it pleaseth thee.* Yet in *humility* these *reasons* may be assigned, 1. To shew himself a *free agent*, not confined to follow the same precedent, and to deal with all as he doth with some. 2. To render the prospect of his proceedings the more pleasant to their sight who judiciously survey it, when they meet with so much diversity and variety therein. 3. That men being both ignorant when, and uncertain whether or not God will visit them with *wounded consciences*, may wait on him with humble hearts in the work of their salvation, *looking as the eyes of the * servants to receive orders from the hand of their master*; but what, when, and how, they know not,

* Psalm cxxiii. 2.

which quickens their daily expectations and diligent dependance on his pleasure.

Tim. *I am one of those, whom God hitherto hath not humbled with a wounded conscience: give me some instruction for my behaviour.*

Phil. First, be heartily thankful to God's infinite goodness, who hath not dealt thus with every one. Now because *repentance* hath two parts, *mourning* and *mending*, or *humiliation* and *reformation*, the more God hath abated thee in the former, out of his *gentleness*, the more must thou increase in the latter, out of thy *gratitude*. What thy *humiliation* hath wanted of other men, in the *depth* thereof, let thy *reformation* make up in the *breadth* thereof, spreading into an universal *obedience* unto all God's commandments. Well may he expect more *work* to be done by thy *hands*, who hath laid less *weight* to be borne on thy *shoulders*.

Tim. *What other use must I make of God's kindness unto me?*

Phil. You are bound the more patiently to bear all God's *rods, poverty, sickness, dis-*

grace, captivity, &c. seeing God hath freed thee from the stinging scorpion of a *wounded conscience*.

Tim. *How shall I demean myself for the time to come?*

Phil. Be not high minded, but fear; for thou canst not infallibly infer, that because thou hast not hitherto, hereafter thou shalt not taste of a *wounded conscience*.

Tim. *I will therefore for the future with continual fear, wait for the coming thereof.*

Phil. Wait not for it with servile fear, but watch against it with constant carefulness. There is a slavish fear to be visited with a *wounded conscience*, which fear is to be avoided, for it is opposite to the free spirit of grace, derogatory to the goodness of God in his gospel, destructive to spiritual joy, which we ought always to have, and dangerous to the soul, wrecking it with anxieties and unworthy suspicions. Thus to fear a *wounded conscience*, is in part to feel it antidating one's misery, and tormenting himself before the time, seeking for that he would be loath to find: like the wicked in

the * *Gospel*, of whom it is said, *men's hearts failing them for fear, and looking for those things which are coming.* Far be such a fear from thee, and all good Christians.

Tim. *What fear then is it, that you so lately recommended unto me?*

Phil. One, consisting in the cautious avoiding of all causes and occasions of a *wounded conscience*, conjoined with a confidence in God's goodness, that he will either preserve us from, or protect us in the torture thereof; and if he ever sends it, will sanctify it in us, to his glory, and our good. May I, you, and all God's servants, ever have this *noble fear* (as I may term it) in our hearts.

* Luke xxi. 26.

DIALOGUE III.

Three solemn Seasons when Men are surprised with wounded Consciences.

Tim. *What are those times, wherein men most commonly are assaulted with wounded consciences?*

Phil. So bad a guest may visit a man at any hour of his life; for no season is unseasonable for God to be just, Satan to be mischievous, and sinful man to be miserable; yet it happens especially at three principal times.

Tim. *Of these, which is the first?*

Phil. In the twilight of a man's conversion, in the very conflict and combat betwixt nature and initial grace. For then he that formerly slept in carnal security, is awakened with his fearful condition: *God, as he saith,*

Psalm l. 21, setteth his sins in order before his eyes. *Imprimis*, the sin of his conception. *Item*, the sins of his childhood. *Item*, of his youth. *Item*, of his man's estate, &c. *Or, Imprimis*, sins against the first table. *Item*, sins against the second ; so many of ignorance, so many of knowledge, so many of presumption severally sorted by themselves. He committed sins confusedly, huddling them up in heaps ; but God *sets them in order*, and methodizes them to his hand.

Tim. *Sins thus set in order must needs be a terrible sight.*

Phil. Yes surely, the rather because the metaphor may seem taken from setting an army in battle array. At this conflict in his first conversion, behold a troop of sins cometh, and when God himself shall marshal them in rank and file, what guilty conscience is able to endure the furious charge of so great and well ordered an army ?

Tim. Suppose the party dies before he be completely converted in this twilight condition as you term it, what then becomes of his soul, which may seem too good to dwell in

outer darkness with devils, and too bad to go to the God of light?

Phil. Your supposition is impossible: Remember our discourse only concerns the godly. Now God never is father to abortive children, but to such who, according to his appointment, shall come to perfection.

Tim. *Can they not therefore die in this interim, before the work of grace be wrought in them?*

Phil. No verily. Christ's bones were in themselves breakable, but could not actually be broken by all the violence in the world, because God hath fore-decreed, *a bone of him shall not be broken*. So we confess God's children mortal; but all the power of devil or man may not, must not, shall not, cannot, kill them before their conversion, according to God's election of them to life, which must

~~be~~ accomplished.

Tim. *What is the second solemn time when wounded consciences assault men?*

Phil. After their conversion completed, ~~and this~~ either upon the committing of a continuing sin, such as Tertullian calls

peccatum devoratorium salutis, or upon the undergoing of some heavy affliction of a bigger standard and proportion, blacker hue and complexion, than what befalls ordinary men, as in the case of Job.

Tim. *Which is the third, and last time, when wounded consciences commonly walk abroad?*

Phil. When men lie on their death-beds, Satan must now roar, or else for ever hold his peace: roar he may afterwards with very anger to vex himself, not with any hope to hurt us. There is mention in *Scripture of an evil day*, which is most applicable to the time of our death. We read also of an hour of * temptation; and the † prophet tells us there is a moment, wherein God may seem to forsake us. Now Satan being no less cunning to find out, than careful to make use of his time of advantage, in that moment of that hour of that day, will put hard for our souls, and we must expect a shrewd parting blow from him.

* Rev. iii. 10.

† Isa. lviii. 7.

Tim. Your doleful prediction disheartens me, for fear I may be foiled in my last encounter.

Phil. Be of good comfort : through Christ we shall be victorious, both in dying and in death itself. Remember God's former favours bestowed upon thee. Indeed wicked men, from the premises of God's power, collect a conclusion of his weakness, *Psalm lxxviii.*
 20. *Behold he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed: can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?* But God's children * by better logic, from the prepositions of God's former preservations, infer his power and pleasure to protect them for the future. Be assured, that *God which hath been the God of the mountains, and made our mountains strong in time of our prosperity, will also be the God of the vallies, and lead us safe + through the valley of the shadow of death.*

* 1 Sam. xvii. 36.—2 Cor. i. 10.

+ Psalm xxxiii. 4.

DIALOGUE IV.

*The great Torment of a wounded Conscience,
protested by Reasons and Examples.*

Tim. *Is the pain of a wounded conscience
so great as is pretended?*

Phil. God * saith it, we have seen it, and others have felt it, whose complaints savour as little of dissimulation, as their cries in a fit of the cholic do of counterfeiting.

Tim. *Whence comes this wound to be so
great and grievous?*

Phil. Six reasons may be assigned thereof. The first drawn from the *heaviness of the hand* which makes the *wound*; namely, God himself, conceived under the notion of an infinite angry judge. In all other afflictions, man encounters only with man, and in the worst temptations, only with *Satan*; but in

* Prov. xviii. 14.

a *wounded conscience*, he enters the lists immediately with God himself.

Tim. *Whence is the second reason brought?*

Phil. From the * sharpness of the sword, wherewith the *wound* is *made*, being the word of God, and the keen threatenings of the law therein contained. There is mention, Gen. iii. 24. of a *sword turning every way*: parallel whereto is the word of God in a *wounded conscience*. Man's heart is full of windings, turnings, and doublings, to shift and shun the stroke thereof if possible; but this sword meets them wheresoever they move—it fetches and finds them out—it haunts and hunts them, forbidding them during their agony, any entrance into the paradise of one comfortable thought.

Tim. *Whence is the third reason derived?*

Phil. From the tenderness of the part itself which is *wounded*; the *conscience* being of the eyes of the soul, sensible of the hurt. And when that *callum, schirrus, encrustation*, drawn over it by nature,

and hardened by custom in sin, is once flayed off, the *conscience* becomes so pliant and supple, that the least imaginable touch is painful unto it.

Tim. What is the fourth reason?

Phil. The folly of the patient: who being stung, hath not the wisdom to look up to Christ, the *brazen serpent*, but torments himself with his own activity. It was threatened to * *Pashur*, *I will make thee a terror to thyself*: So fares it with God's best saint during the fit of his perplexed *conscience*; he hears his own voice—he thinks, this is that which so often hath sworn, lyed, talked vainly, wantonly, wickedly; his voice is a *terror to himself*. He sees his own eyes in a glass—he presently apprehends, these are those which shot forth so many envious, covetous, amorous glances; his eyes are a *terror to himself*. Sheep are observed to fly without cause, scared, (as some say) with the *sound of their own feet*: Their feet knock, because they fly, and they

* Jer. xx. 4.

ner, when a set of *bad-good-fellows* perceive one of their society dogged with God's terrors at his heels, they will forsake him as soon as they can, preferring his room, and declining his company, lest his sadness prove infectious to themselves. And now, if all six reasons be put together, so *heavy a hand*, smiting with so *sharp a sword* on so *tender a part* of so *foolish a patient*, whilst *Satan seeks to widen*, and *no worldly plaister can cure the wound*, it sufficiently proves a *wounded conscience* to be an exquisite torture.

Tim. Give me I pray an example hereof.

Phil. When *Adam* had eaten the *forbidden fruit*, he tarried a time in *Paradise*, but took no contentment therein. The *sun* did shine as *bright*, the *riters ran* as *clear* as ever before, *birds sang* as *sweetly*, *beasts played* as *pleasantly*, *flowers smelt* as *fragrant*, *herbs grew* as *fresh*, *fruits flourished* as *fair*, no *punctilio of pleasure* was either altered or abated. The *objects* were the same, but *m's eyes* were otherwise, his *nakedness* *in his light*; a *thorn of guiltiness* grew *is heart* before any *thistles* sprang out of

the ground ; which made him not to seek for the fairest fruits to fill his hunger, but the biggest leaves to cover his nakedness. Thus a wounded conscience is able to unparadise Paradise itself.

Tim. Give me another instance.

Phil. CHRIST JESUS our Saviour, he was blinded, buffeted, scourged, scoffed at, had his hands and feet nailed on the cross, and all this while said nothing. But no sooner apprehended he his Father deserting him, groaning under the burthen of the sins of mankind imputed unto him, but presently the Lamb, (who hitherto was *dumb before his shearer, and opened not his mouth*) for pain began to bleat, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Tim. Why is a wounded conscience by David resembled to arrows, * thine arrows stick fast in me ?

Phil. Because an arrow, especially if barbed, rakes and rends the flesh the more, the more metal the wounded party hath to

* Psalm xxxviii. 2.

strive and struggle with it : and a *guilty conscience* pierces the deeper, whilst a stout stomach with might and main seeks to out-wrestle it.

Tim. *May not a wounded conscience also work on the body to hasten and heighten the sickness thereof?*

Phil. Yes verily, so that there may be employment for * *Luke, the beloved physician*, (if the same person with the *Evangelist*) to exercise both his professions : but we meddle only with the malady of the mind, abstracted from any bodily indisposition.

DIALOGUE V.

Sovereign Uses to be made of the Torment of a wounded Conscience.

Tim. *Seeing the torture of a wounded conscience is so great, what use is to be made thereof?*

* Col. iv. 14.

Phil. Very much : And first, it may make men sensible of the intolerable pain in *hell fire*. If the *mouth* of the *fiery furnace* into which the *children* were cast, was so hot that it burnt those which approached it, how hot was the *furnace* itself ? If a *wounded conscience*, the *suburbs* of *hell*, be so painful, oh how extreme is that place, *where the worm never dieth, and the fire is never quenched?*

Tim. *Did our roaring boys (as they call them) but seriously consider this, they would not wish GOD DAMN THEM, and GOD CONFOUND THEM so frequently as they do.*

Phil. No verily : I read in *Theodore* of the ancient *Donatists*, that they were so ambitious of martyrdom, (as they accounted it) that many of them meeting with a young *gentleman* requested of him, that he would be pleased to kill them. He, to confute their folly, condescended to their desire, on condition, that first they would submit to be fast bound : which being done, he gave order that they should be severely scourged, and then saved their lives. In ap-

plication : When I hear such *riotous youths* wish that God would *damn* or *confound* them, I hope God will be more merciful, than to *take them at their words*, and to grant them their wish ; only I heartily desire that he would be pleased, sharply to scourge them, and soundly to lash them with the frights and terrors of a *wounded conscience*. And I doubt not, but that they would so ill like the pain thereof, that they would revoke their wishes, as having little list, and less delight to taste of *hell* hereafter.

Tim. *What other use is to be made of the pain of a wounded conscience ?*

Phil. To teach us seasonably to prevent, what we cannot possibly endure. Let us shun the smallest sin, lest if we slight and neglect it, it by degrees fester and gangrene into a *wounded conscience*. One of the bravest* ~~s~~ *s* that ever *England* bred, or *Ireland* tried, lost his life by a slight *hurt* neglected, as if it had been beneath his high mind to stoop to the dressing thereof, till it was too

as *Norris*, president of *Munster*, *ex levi sublatu*s**. Cambden's *Elizab.* An. 1641.

late. Let us take heed the stoutest of us be not so served in our souls. If we repent not presently of our sins committed, but carelessly contemn them, a *scratch* may quickly prove an *ulcer*; the rather, because the *flesh* of our mind, if I may so use the metaphor, is hard to heal full of choleric and corrupt humours, and very ready to rankle.

Tim. What else may we gather for our instruction from the torture of a troubled mind?

Phil. To confute their cruelty, who out of sport or spite, willingly and wittingly wound *weak consciences*; like those uncharitable * *Corinthians*, who so far improve their liberty in things indifferent, as thereby to wound the *consciences* of their weak brethren.

Tim. Are not those ministers to blame, who, mistaking their message, instead of bringing the gospel of peace, frighten people with legal terrors into despair?

Phil. I cannot commend their discretion,

yet will not condemn their intention herein. No doubt their desire and design is pious, though they err in the pursuit and prosecution thereof, casting down them whom they cannot raise, and conjuring up the *spirit of bondage* which they cannot allay again: wherefore it is our wisest way, to interweave promises with threatenings, and not to leave open a pit of despair, but to cover it again with comfort.

Tim. Remaineth there not as yet, another use of this point?

Phil. Yes, to teach us to pity and pray for those that have *afflicted consciences*, not like the wicked, **who persecute those whom God hath smitten, and talk to the grief of such whom he hath wounded.*

Tim. Yet Eli was a good man, who notwithstanding censured † Hannah, a woman of a sorrowful spirit, to be drunk with wine.

Phil. Imitate not *Eli* in committing, but amending his fault. Indeed his dim eyes could see *drunkenness* in *Hannah* where it

* Psalm lxix. 26.

† 1 Sam. i. 13, 14.

was not, and could not see *sacrilege* and *adultery* in his own *sons*, where they were. Thus those who are most indulgent to their own, are most censorious of others sins. But *Eli* afterwards perceiving his error, turned the condemning of *Hannah* into praying for her. In like manner, if in our passion we have prejudiced, or injured any *wounded consciences*, in cold blood let us make them the best amends and reparation.

DIALOGUE VI.

That in some Cases more Repentance must be preached to a wounded Conscience.

Tim. So much for the malady, now for the remedy. Suppose you come to a wounded conscience, what counsel will you prescribe him?

Phil. If after hearty prayer to God for his direction, he appeareth unto me, as yet, not truly penitent, in the first place I will

press a deeper degree of repentance upon him.

Tim. O miserable comforter! more sorrow still! Take heed your eyes be not put out with that smoking flax, you seek to quench, and your fingers wounded with the splinters of that bruised reed you go about to break.

Phil. Understand me, Sir. Better were my tongue spit out of my mouth, than to utter a word of grief to drive them to despair, who are truly contrite. But on the other side, I shall betray my trust, and be found an unfaithful dispenser of divine mysteries, to apply comfort to him who is not ripe and ready for it.

Tim. What harm would it do?

Phil. Raise him for the present, and ruin him, without God's greater mercy for the future. For comfort daubed on, on a foul soul, will not stick long upon it: and instead of pouring in, I shall spill the precious oil of God's mercy. Yea, I may justly bring a wounded conscience upon myself, for dealing deceitful in my stewardship.

Tim. Is it possible one may not be

soundly humbled, and yet have a wounded conscience.

Phil. Most possible: for a *wounded conscience* is often inflicted as a punishment for lack of true repentance: great is the difference betwixt a man's being frightened at, and humbled for his sins. One may passively be cast down by God's terrors, and yet not willingly throw himself down as he ought at God's footstool.

Tim. *Seeing his pain is so pitiful as you have formerly proved; why would you add more grief unto him?*

Phil. I would not add grief to him, but alter grief in him; making his sorrow, not greater, but better. I would endeavour to change his dismal, doleful dejection, his hideous, and horrible heaviness, his bitter exclamations, which seem to me much mixed in him, with pride, impatience, and impenitence, into a willing submission to God's pleasure, and into a kindly, gentle, tender gospel repentance, for his sins.

Tim. *But there are some now-a-days who maintain that a child of God after his first*

conversion, needs not any new repentance for sin all the days of his life.

Phil. They defend a grievous and dangerous error. Consider what two petitions Christ couples together in his *prayer*: when my body which every day is hungry, can live without God's *giving it daily bread*, then and no sooner shall I believe, that my soul, which daily sinneth, can spiritually live, without God's *forgiving it its trespasses*.

Tim. *But such allege, in proof of their opinion, that a man hath his person justified before God, not by pieces and parcels, but at once and for ever in his conversion.*

Phil. This being granted doth not favour their error. We confess God finished the creation of the world, and all therein in six days, and then rested from that work, yet so, that his daily preserving of all things by his providence, may still be accounted a constant and continued creation. We acknowledge in like manner, a child of God justified at once in his conversion, when he is fully and freely estated in God's favour. And yet

seeing every daily sin by him committed, is an aversion from God, and his daily repentance a conversion to God, his justification in this respect, may be conceived entirely continued all the days of his life.

Tim. What is the difference betwixt the first repentance, and this renewed repentance?

Phil. The former, is as it were the putting of life into a dead man, the latter, the recovering of a sick man from a dangerous wound; by the former, sight to the blind is simply restored, and eyes given him; in the latter, only a film is removed, drawn over the eyes, and hindering their actual sight. By the first, we have a right title to the kingdom of Heaven: by our second repentance, we have a new claim to Heaven, by virtue of our old title. Thus these two kinds of repentance may be differenced and distinguished, though otherwise they meet and agree in general qualities: both having sin for their cause, sorrow for their companion, and pardon for their consequent and effect.

Tim. But do not God's children after

committing of grievous sins, and before their renewing their repentance, remain still heirs of Heaven, married to Christ, and citizens of the new Jerusalem?

Phil. Heirs of Heaven they are, but disinheritable for their misdemeanour. Married still to Christ, but deserving to be divorced for their adulteries. Citizens of Heaven, but yet outlawed, so that they can recover no right, and receive no benefit, till their outlawry be reversed.

Tim. *Where doth God in scripture enjoin this second repentance on his own children?*

Phil. In several places. He threatens the * *church of Ephesus* (the best of the seven) with *removing the candlestick from them, except they repent*: and Christ tells his own disciples, true converts before, but then guilty of ambitious thoughts, that † *except ye be converted ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven*. Here is conversion, being a solemn turning from a mortal sin; in relation to which it

is not absurd to say, that there is justification after justification ; the latter as following in time, so flowing from the former.

DIALOGUE VII.

Only Christ is to be applied to Souls truly contrite.

Tim. But suppose the person in the ministers apprehension heartily humbled for sin, what then is to be done ?

Phil. No corrosives, all cordials ; no vinegar, all oil ; no law, all gospel must be presented unto him. Here, blessed the lips yea beautiful the feet of him that bringeth the tidings of peace. As * Elisha, when reviving the son of the Shunamite laid his mouth to the mouth of the child. So the gaping orifice of Christ's wounds must spiritually by preaching, be put close to the mouth of the wounds of a conscience : happy

* 2. Kings iv. 34.

that skilful architect that can shew the sick man that the * *head stone* of his spiritual building must be laid with shouts, crying grace, grace.

Tim. Which do you count the head stone of thy building, that which is first or last laid?

Paw. The foundation is the *head stone* in number, the top stone is the *head stone* in height. The former the *head stone* in strength, the latter in stature. It seemeth that God's spirit, of set purpose made use of a wonderful word, to shew that the whole fabric of our salvation, whether as founded, or as finished, is the only work of God's grace alone. Christ is the *alpha* and *omega* thereof, not excluding all the letters in the alphabet interposed.

Tim. How must the minister preach Christ to an afflicted conscience?

Phil. He must crucify him before his eyes, by setting him forth; naked, to cloath him; wounded, to cure him; dying, to save him. He is to expound and explain unto him, the ignity of his person, pretiousness of his

* Zech. iv. 7.

blood, plenteousness of his mercy, in all those loving relations, wherein the scripture presents him: a kind *father* to a prodigal *child*, a careful *hen* to a scattered *chicken*, a good *shepherd* that bringeth his lost *sheep* back on his *shoulders*.

Tim. Spare me one question, why doth he not drive the sheep before him, especially seeing it was lively enough to lose itself.—

Phil. First, because though it had wilderness too much to go astray, it had not wisdom enough to go right. Secondly, because probably the silly sheep had tired itself with wandring; *Habakuk ii. 13.* “*the people shall weary themselves for very vanity,*” and therefore the kind shepherd brings it home on his own shoulders.

Tim. Pardon my interruption, and proceed, how Christ is to be held forth.

Phil. The latitude and extent of his love, his invitation without exception, are powerfully to be prest; *every one that thirsteth, all ye that are heavy laden, whosoever believeth,* and the many promises of mercy are effectually to be tendered unto him.

Tim. Where are those promises in scripture?

Phil. Or rather, where are they not? for they are harder to be missed than to be met with. Open the *Bible* (as he * who drew his bow in battle) at a venture. If thou lightest on an *historical place*, behold precedents; if on a doctrinal, promises of comfort. For the latter, observe these particulars; *Gen.* iii. 15. *Exo.* xxxiii. 6. *Isa.* xl. 1. *Isa.* liv. 11. *Mat.* xi. 28. *Mat.* xii. 20. *1 Cor.* x. 13. *Heb.* xiii. 5. &c.

Tim. Are these more principal places of consolation than any other in the Bible?

Phil. I know there is no choosing, where all things are choicest. Whosoever shall select some pearls out of such a *heap*, shall leave behind as precious as any he takes, both in his own and others judgment; yea, which is more, the same man at several times may in his apprehension prefer several promises as best, formerly most affected with one place, for the present more delighted with another;

and afterwards conceiving comfort therein not so clear, choose other places as more pregnant and pertinent to his purpose. Thus God orders it, that divers men (and perchance the same man at different times) make use of all his promises, gleaning and gathering comfort, not only in one furrow, land, or furlong, but as its scattered clean through the whole field of the scripture.

Tim. Must ministers have variety of several comfortable promises?

Phil. Yes, surely: such masters of the assembly being to enter and fasten consolation in an afflicted soul, need have many nails provided beforehand, that if some for the present, chance to drive untowardly, as splitting, going awry, turning crooked or blunt, they may have others in the room thereof.

Tim. But grant Christ held out never so plainly, prest never so powerfully, yet all is in vain, except God inwardly with his spirit persuade the wounded conscience to believe the truth of what he saith:

Phil. This is an undoubted truth, for one

may lay the *bread of life* on their trencher, and cannot force them to feed on it. One may bring them down to the *spring of life*, but cannot make them drink of the waters thereof: and therefore in the cure of a *wounded conscience*, God is all in all, only the touch of his hand can *heal this *king's evil*, *I kill and make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.*

DIALOGUE VIII.

Answers to the objections of a wounded Conscience drawn from the grievousness of his sins.

Tim. *Give me leave now, Sir, to personate and represent a wounded conscience, and to alledge and enforce such principal objection wherewith generally they are grieved.*

* Deut. xxxii. 39.

Phil. With all my heart, and God bless
my endeavours in answering them.

Tim. But first I would be satisfied how it comes to pass, that men in a wounded conscience have their parts so presently improved. The Jews did question concerning our Saviour, * How knoweth this man letters being never learned. But here the doubt and difficulty is greater. How come simple people so subtle on a sudden, to oppose with that advantage and vehemence, that it would puzzle a good and grave divine to answer them.

Phil. Two reasons may be rendered thereof. 1. Because a man in a distemper, is stronger than when he is in his perfect health. What Sampson's are some in the fit of a fever? Then their spirits, being raised by the violence of their disease, push with all their power. So is it in the agony of a distressed soul, every string thereof is strained to the height, and a man becomes more than himself to object against himself in a fit of despair.

* John vii. 15.

Tim. What is the other reason ?

Phil. Satan himself, that subtle *sophister* assists them. He forms their arguments, frames their objections, fits their distinctions, shapes their evasions ; and this *discomforter* (aping God's spirit, the comforter, *John xiv. 26.*) *bringeth all things to their remembrance* which they have heard or read, to dishearten them. Need therefore have ministers, when they meddle with afflicted men, to call to Heaven beforehand to assist them, being sure they shall have hell itself to oppose them.

Tim. To come now to the objections which afflicted consciences commonly make : they may be reduced to three principal heads ; either drawn from the greatness and grievousness of their sins, or from the slightness and lightness of their repentance, or from the faintness and feebleness of their faith ; I begin with the objections of the first form.

Phil. I approve your method, pray proceed.

Tim. First, Sir, even since my conversion, I have been guilty of many grievous sins ;

*and, which is worse, of the same sin many times committed. Happy * Judah, who though once committing incest with Thamar, yet the text saith, that afterwards he knew her again no more. But I, vile wretch, have often re-fallen into the same offence.*

Phil. All this is answered in God's promise in the † prophet, *Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as snow.* Consider how the Tyrian scarlet was dyed, not superficially dipped, but thoroughly drenched in the liquor that coloured it, as thy soul in custom of sinning. Then was it taken out for a time and dried, put in again, soaked and sodden the second time in the fat; called therefore σεαφον, twice dyed; as thou complainest thou hast been by relapsing into the same sin. Yea, the colour so incorporated into the cloth not drawn over, but diving into the very heart of the wool, that rub a scarlet rag on what is white, and it will bestow a reddish tincture upon it; as perchance, thy sinful practice and president

have also infected those which were formerly good, by thy badness. Yet such scarlet sins so solemnly and substantially coloured, are easily washed white in the blood of our Saviour.

Tim. But, Sir, I have sinned against most serious resolutions, yea against most solemn vows, which I have made to the contrary.

Phil. Vow-breaking, though a grievous sin, is pardonable on unfeigned repentance. If thou hast broken a vow, tie a *knot* on it to make it hold together again. It is spiritual thrift, and no mis-becoming baseness, to piece and join thy neglected promises with fresh ones. So shall thy vow in effect be not broken when new mended: and remain the same, though not by one entire continuation, yet by a constant successive renovation thereof. Thus * *Jacob* renewed his neglected vow of going to *Bethel*; and this must thou do, re-inforce thy broken vows, if of *moment and material*.

* Compare Gen. xxviii. 20, with Gen. xxxv. 1.

Tim. What mean you by the addition of that clause, if of moment and material?

Phil. To deal plainly, I dislike many vows men make, as of reading just so much, and praying so often every day, of confining themselves to such a strict proportion of meat, drink, sleep, recreation, &c. Many things may be well done, which are ill vowed. Such particular vows men must be very sparing how they make. First, because they savour somewhat of will-worship. Secondly, small glory accrues to God thereby. Thirdly, the dignity of vows is disgraced by descending to too trivial particulars. Fourthly, Satan hath ground given him to throw at us with a more steady aim. Lastly, such vows, instead of being cords to tie us faster to God, prove knots to entangle our consciences : hard to be kept, but oh ! how heavy when broken ? Wherefore setting such vows aside, let us be careful with *David*, to keep that grand and general vow ; * *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

Tim. But, Sir, I have committed the sin against the holy Ghost, which the Saviour of mankind pronounceth unpardonable, and therefore all your counsels and comforts unto me are in vain.

Phil. The devil, the father of lies, hath added this lie to those, which he hath told before, in persuading thee thou hast committed the *sin* against the *holy Ghost*. For that sin is ever attended with these two symptoms. First, the party guilty thereof never grieves for it, nor conceives the least sorrow in his heart for the sin he hath committed. The second, which followeth on the former, he never wishes or desires any pardon, but is delighted and pleased with his present condition. Now, if thou canst truly say, that thy sins are a burden unto thee, that thou dost desire forgiveness, and wouldest give any thing to compass and obtain it, be of good comfort, thou hast not as yet, and by God's grace, never shalt commit that unpardonable offence. I will not define how near thou hast been unto it. As *David* said to *Jonah*, *There is not a hair's breadth betwixt*

*death and me: so it may be thou hast mist
it very narrowly, but assure thyself thou art
not as yet guilty thereof.*

DIALOGUE IX.

*Answers to the objections of a wounded Con-
science drawn from the slightness of his
Repentance.*

*Tim. I believe my sins are pardonable in
themselves, but alas, my stony heart is such,
that it cannot relent and repent, and therefore
no hope of my salvation.*

*Phil. Wouldest thou sincerely repent? thou dost repent. The women that came to embalm * Christ, did carefully forecast with themselves, who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? Alas; their frail, faint, feeble arms, were unable to remove such a weight. But what follows? And*

when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great. In like manner, when a soul is truly troubled about the mighty burden of his stony heart interposed, hindring him from coming to Christ ; I say when he is seriously and sincerely solicitous about that impediment, such desiring is a doing, such wishing is a working. Do thou but take care it may be removed, and God will take order it shall be removed.

Tim. But, Sir, I cannot weep for my sins ; my eyes are like the pit wherein Joseph was put ; there is no water in them, I cannot squeeze one tear out of them.

Phil. Before I come to answer your objection, I must premise a profitable observation. I have taken notice of a strange opposition betwixt the tongues and eyes of such as have *troubled consciences*. Their tongues some have known (and I have heard) complain that they cannot weep for their sins, when at that instant their eyes have plentifully shed store of tears : not that they *speak* out of dissimulation, but *distraction*. So sometimes have I smiled at the simplicity of

a child, who being amazed, and demanded whether or no he could speak? hath answered, *no*. If in like manner at the sight of such a contradiction betwixt the words and deeds of one in the agony of a *wounded conscience*, we should chance to smile, knew us not to jeer, but joy, perceiving the party in a better condition than he conceiveth himself.

Tim. This your observation may be comfortable to others, but is impertinent to me. For as I told you, I have by nature such dry eyes that they will afford no moisture to bemoan my sins.

Phil. Then it is a natural defect, and no moral default, so by consequence a suffering and no sin, which God will punish. God doth not expect the pipe should run water, where he put none into the cistern. Know also, their hearts may be fountains whose eyes are flints, and may inwardly bleed, who do not outwardly weep. Besides * Christ was sent to preach comfort, not to such only as weep, but mourn in Zion. Yea if thou canst squeeze out no liquor, offer to God the

* Isai. li. 3.

empty bottles ; instead of tears, tender and present thine eyes unto him. And though thou [are water-bound, be not wind-bound also, sigh where thou canst not sob, and let thy *lungs* do what thine *eyes* cannot perform.

Tim. You say something though I cannot weep, in case I could soundly sorrow for my sins. But alas, for temporal losses and crosses, I am like Rachael, lamenting for her children, and would not be comforted. But my sorrow for my sins is so small, that it appears none at all in proportion.

Phil. In the best saints of God, their sorrow for their sins being measured with the sorrow for their sufferings, in one respect, will fall short of it, in another must equal it, and in a third respect doth exceed and go beyond it. Sorrow for sins falls short of sorrow for sufferings, in loud lamenting or violent uttering itself in outward expressions thereof; as in roaring, wringing the hands, rending the hair, and the like. Secondly, both sorrows are equal in their truth and sincerity, both far from hypocrisy, free from dissimulation, really hearty, cordial, un-

counterfeited. Lastly, sorrow for sin exceeds sorrow for suffering, in the continuance and durableness thereof: the other like a land-flood, quickly come, quickly gone; this is a continual dropping or running river, keeping a constant stream. *My sins, saith David, are ever before me;* so also is the sorrow for sin in the soul of a child of God, morning, evening, day, night, when sick, when sound, feasting, fasting, at home, abroad, ever within him. This grief begins at his conversion, continues all his life, ends only at his death.

Tim. *Proceed I pray in this comfortable point.*

Phil. It may still be made plainer by comparing two diseases together, the *tooth-ach* and *consumption*. Such as are troubled with the former, shriek and cry out, troublesome to themselves, and others in the same and next room: and no wonder, the *mouth* itself being *plaintiff*, if setting forth its own grievances to the full. Yet the *tooth-ach* is known to be no mortal malady, having kept some from their beds, seldom sent them to

their graves ; hindered the sleep of many, hastened the death of few. On the other side, he that hath an incurable *consumption* saith little, cries less, but grieves most of all. Alas, he must be a good husband of the little breath left in his broken lungs, not to spend it in sighing, but in living, he makes no noise, is quiet and silent ; yet none will say, but that his inward grief is greater than the former.

Tim. How apply you this comparison to my objection ?

Phil. In corporal calamities, thou com-plainest more, like him in the *tooth-ach*, but thy sorrow for thy sin, like a *consumption*, which lies at thy heart, hath more solid heaviness therein. Thou dost take in more grief for thy sins, though thou mayest take on more grievously for thy sufferings.

*Tim. This were something if my sorrow
· sin were sincere, but alas, I am but a
hypocrite. There is * mention in the pro-
phet of God's bosom of destruction ; now
the trust of a hypocrite, Job viii. 14, is*

* Isa. xiv. 23.

called a spider's web, here is my case, when God's bosom meets with the cobwebs of my hypocrisy, I shall be swept into hell fire.

Phil. I answer, first in general: I am glad to hear this objection come from thee, for self-suspicion of hypocrisy, is a hopeful symptom of sincerity. It is a *David* that cries out, *as for me I am poor and needy*; but luke warm *Laodicea* that brags, *I am rich and want nothing*.

Tim. Answer I pray the objection in particular.

Phil. Presently, when I have premised the great difference, betwixt a man's being a *hypocrite*, and having some hypocrisy in him. Wicked men are like the *apples* of * *Sodom*, seemingly fair, but nothing but *ashes* within. The best of God's servants are like sound *apples*, lying in a dusty loft, (living in a wicked world) gathering much dust about them, so that they must be rubbed or pared, before they can be eaten. Such notwithstanding are sincere, and by the following *marks* may examine themselves.

* *Selinus Polyhistor in Judea.*

Tim. But some in the present day are
utter enemies to all marks of sincerity, count-
ing it needless for preachers to propound, or
people to apply them.

Phil. I know as much; but it is the worst
sign, when men of this description hate all
signs: but no wonder if the *foundered horse*,
cannot abide the *smith's pincers*.

Tim. Proceed I pray in your signs of
sincerity.

Phil. Art thou careful to order thy very
thoughts, because the infinite searcher of the
heart doth behold them? Dost thou freely and
fully confess thy sins to God, spreading them
open in his presence, without any desire or
endeavour to deny, dissemble, defend, excuse,
or extenuate them? Dost thou delight in an
universal obedience to all God's laws, not
thinking with the superstitious Jews, by over-
keeping the fourth commandment, to make
reparation to God for breaking all the rest.
Dost thou love their persons and preaching
best, who most clearly discover thine own
faults and corruptions unto thee? Dost thou
strive against thy revengeful nature, not only

to forgive those who have offended thee; but also to wait an occasion with humility to render a suitable favour to them? Dost thou love grace and goodness even in those, who differ from thee in point of *opinion*, and *civil controversies*? Canst thou be sorrowful for the sins of others, no whit relating unto thee, merely because the glory of a good God, suffers by their profaneness.

Tim. Why do you make these to be the signs of sincerity?

Phil. Because there are but two principles, which act in men's hearts, namely, *nature* and *grace*; or, as Christ distinguishes them, *flesh*, and *blood*, and *our father which is Heaven*. Now seeing these actions, by us propounded, are either against or above nature, it doth necessarily follow, that where they are found, they flow from saving grace. For what is higher than the roof, and very pinnaole, as I may say, of nature, cannot be lower than the bottom and beginning of grace.

Tim. Perchance on serious search, I may

make more shift. or now cover one or two of
these signs, nor for all of them in thy heart.

Phil. As I will not now to flatter any, so
I will tell thee as far as truth will give me
leave, to much comfort to the humble, to
where it is due. Know in thy further con-
sideration, that where some of these signs truly
are, there are more yet all of them, though
not so visible and conspicuous, but in a
dimmer and darker degree. When we be-
hold roses, and primroses, fairly to flourish,
we conclude the dead of the winter is past,
though, as yet, no roses, or July flowers ap-
pear, which, long after, lye hid in their
leaves, or lurk in their roots; but in due
time will discover themselves. If some of
these signs be above ground in thy sight,
others are under ground in thy heart, and
though the former started first, the other will
follow in order: it being plain that thou art
passed from death unto life, by this hopeful
and happy spring of some signs in thy
heart.

DIALOGUE X.

Answers to the Objection of a wounded Conscience, drawn from the feebleness of his faith.

Tim. But *faith is that which must apply Christ unto us, whilst (alas!) the hand of my faith hath not only the shaking, but the dead palsy; it can neither hold nor feel anything.*

Phil. If thou canst not hold God, do but touch him and he shall hold thee, and put feeling into thee. Saint *Paul* saith, * *If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* It is not *Paul's* apprehending of *Christ*, but *Christ* apprehending of *Paul*, doth the deed.

Tim. But *I am sure my faith is not sound, because it is not attended with assurance of salvation. For I doubt (not to say despair) thereof. Whereas Divines hold, that the*

* Phil. iii. 19.

'Essence of saving faith consists in a certainty to be saved.'

Phil. Such deliver both a false, and dangerous doctrine; as the careless mother* killed her little *infant*, *for she over-laid it*: So this opinion would press many weak faiths to death, by laying a greater weight upon them than they can bear, or God doth impose; whereas to be assured of salvation, is not a part of every true faith, but only an effect of some strong faiths, and that also not always, but at some times.

Tim. *Is not certainty of salvation a part of every true faith?*

Phil. No verily, much less is it the life and formality of faith, which consists only in a recumbency on God in Christ, with *Jobs* resolution,† *Though he stay me, yet will I trust in him.* Such an adherence, without an assurance, is sufficient by God's mercy to save thy soul. Those that say that none have a sincere faith without a certainty of salvation, may with as much truth maintain, that none

* 1. Kings iii. 19.

† Job xiii. 15.

are the King's loyal Subjects, but such as are, his *Favourites*.

Tim. Is then assurance of salvation a peculiar personal favour, indulged by God, only to some particular persons?

Phil. Yes verily: Though the *salvation* of all God's *servants* be sure in itself, yet is only *assured* to the apprehensions of some *select* people, and that at some times: For it is too fine *fare* for the best man to *feed* on every day.

Tim. May they that have this assurance, afterwards lose it?

Phil. Undoubtedly they may: God first is gracious to give it them, they for a time careful to keep it; then negligently lose it, then sorrowfully seek it. God again is bountiful to restore it, they happy to recover it; for a while diligent to regain it, then again foolish to forfeit it, and so the same changes in ones life time, often over and over again.

Tim. But some will say, If I may be infallibly saved without this Assurance, I will never endeavour to attain it.

Phil. I would have covered my flowers,

if I had suspected such *spiders* would have sucked them. One may go to heaven without this *Assurance*, as certainly, but not so cheerfully, and therefore prudence to obtain our own comfort, and piety to obey God's command, obliges us all to *give diligence to make our calling and election sure*, both in itself and in our apprehension.

DIALOGUE XI.

God alone can satisfy all Objections of a wounded Conscience.

Tim. *But, Sir, these your answers are no whit satisfactory unto me.*

Phil. An answer may be satisfactory to the objection, both in itself, and in the judgment of all unprejudiced hearers, and yet not satisfactory to the objector, and that in two cases: First, when he is possessed with the spirit of peevishness and perverseness. It is lost labour to seek to feed and fill those,

**who have a greedy horseleach of cavilling
in their heart, crying give, give.**

Tim. What is the second case?

Phil. When the bitterness of his soul is so great and grievous, that he is like the* *Israelites in Egypt, who hearkened not to Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.* Now as those who have meat before them, and will not eat, deserve to starve without pity: so such are much to beemoaned, who through some impediment in their mouth, throat, or stomach, cannot chew, swallow, or digest, comfort presented unto them.

Tim. Such is my condition, what then is to be done unto me?

Phil. I must change my precepts to thee into prayers for thee, that God would * satisfy thee early with his mercy, that thou mayest rejoice. Ministers may endeavour it in vain, whilst they quell one scruple, they start another; whilst they fill one corner of a wounded conscience with comfort, another is empty. Only God can so satisfy the soul,

* Exo. vi. 9.

† Psalm xc.

that each chink and cranny therein, shall be filled with spiritual joy.

Tim. What is the difference betwixt God's, and man's speaking peace to a troubled spirit.

Phil. Man can neither make him to whom he speaks, to hear what he says, or believe what he hears. God speaks with authority, and doth both. His words give hearing to the deaf, and faith to the infidel. When, not the mother of Christ, but Christ himself, shall salute a sick soul with *peace be unto thee*, it will leap for joy, as John the babe sprang, though imprisoned in the dark womb of his mother. Thus the offender is not comforted, though many of the spectators, and under officers tell him he shall be pardoned, until he hears the same from the mouth of the Judge himself who hath power and place to forgive him; and then his heart revives with comfort.

Tim. God send me such comfort: in the mean time, I am thankful unto you for the answers you have given me.

Phil. All that I will add is this. The Lacedemonians had a law, that if a bad

man, or one disesteemed of the people, chanced to give good *counsel*, he was to stand by, and another, against whose person the people had no prejudice, was to speak over the same words, which the former had uttered. I am most sensible to myself of my own wickedness, and how justly I am subject to exception. Only my prayer shall be, that whilst I stand by, and am silent, God's spirit which is free from any fault, and full of all perfection, would be pleased to repeat in thy heart, the self-same answers I have given to your objections: And then, what was weak, shallow, and unsatisfying, as it came from my mouth; shall and will be full, powerful, and satisfactory, as re-inforced in thee, by God's spirit.

DIALOGUE XII.

*Means to be used by wounded Consciences,
for the recovering of Comfort.*

Tim. *Are there any useful means to be prescribed, whereby wounded consciences may recover comfort the sooner?*

Phil. Yes, there are.

Tim. *But now in the present day, some condemn all using of means, let grace alone (say they) fully and freely to do its own work: and thereby man's mind will in due time return to a good temper of its own accord: this is the most spiritual serving of God, whilst using of means, makes but dunces, and truants in Christ's school.*

Phil. What they pretend spiritual, will prove airy and empty, making lewd and lazy Christians: means may and must be used with these cautions. 1. That they be of God's appointment in his word, and not of man's mere invention. 2. That we still remember we are but means, and not the main.

For to account of helps more than helps, is the highway to make them hindrances. Lastly, that none rely barely on the *deed done*, which conceit will undo him that did it, especially if any opinion of merit be fixed therein.

Tim. What is the first means I must use; for I re-assume to personate a wounded conscience?

Phil. Constantly pray to God, that in his due time he would speak peace unto thee.

Tim. My prayers are better omitted than performed: they are so weak they will but bring the greater punishment upon me, and involve me within the* Prophet's curse, to those that do the work of the Lord negligently.

Phil. Prayers negligently performed, draw a curse, but not prayers weakly performed. The former is when one can do better, and will not; the latter is, when one would do better, but alas he cannot: and such failings as they are his sins, so they are

his sorrows also : pray therefore faintly, that thou mayest pray fervently ; pray weakly, that thou mayest pray strongly.

Tim. *But in the law they were forbidden to offer to God any lame* sacrifice, and such are my prayers.*

Phil. 1. Observe a great difference, betwixt the material sacrifice under the *law*, and spiritual Sacrifices (*the calves of the lips*) under the *Gospel*. The former were to be free from all blemish, because they did typify and resemble *Christ* himself. The latter (not figuratively representing *Christ*, but heartily presented unto him) must be as good as may be gotten, though many imperfections will cleave to our best performances, which by God's mercy are forgiven. 2. Know that, that in *Scripture* is accounted lame, which is counterfeit, and dissembling, (in which sense *hypocrites* are properly called *halters*) and therefore if thy prayer though never so weak, be sound, and sincere, it is acceptable with God.

* Deut. xv. 21 † 1. Kings xviii. 21.

Tim. What other counsel do you prescribe me?

Phil. Be diligent in reading the word of God, wherein all comfort is contained; say not that thou art dumpish and indisposed to *read*, but remember how travellers must eat against their stomach; their journey will digest it: and though their palate find no pleasure for the present, their whole body will feel strength for the future. Thou hast a great journey to go, a *wounded conscience* has far to travel to find comfort, (and though weary, shall be welcome at his journey's end) and therefore must feed on God's word, even against his own dull disposition, and shall afterwards reap benefit thereby.

Tim. Proceed in your appointing of wholesome diet for my wounded conscience to observe.

Phil. Avoid solitariness, and associate thyself with pious and godly company: O the blessed fruits thereof! such as want skill or boldness to begin or set a *Psalm*, may competently follow *tune* in concert with others: many houses in *London* have such weak walls,

Tim. How must I dispose myself on the Lord's day?

Phil. Avoid all servile work, and expend it only in such actions, as tend to the sanctifying thereof. God the great *Landlord* of all time, hath let out *six days* in the week to man to farm them; the *seventh day* he reserves as a *demesne* in his own hand: if therefore we would have quiet possession, and comfortable use of what God hath *leased* out to us, let us not encroach on his *demesne*. Some *popish** people make a superstitious *almanack* of the *Sunday*, by the fairness or foulness thereof, guessing of the *weather* all the *week* after. But I dare boldly say, that from our well or ill spending of the *Lord's day*, a probable conjecture may be made, how the following week will be employed. Yea, I conceive, we are bound (as matters now stand in *England*) to a stricter observation of the *Lord's day*, than ever before. That a time was due to God's service, no christian in our kingdom ever did deny: that the same was

* If it rains on Sunday before Mess—it will rain all week more or less. A popish old rhyme.

weekly dispersed in the *Lord's day, holy days, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays*, some have earnestly maintained: seeing therefore all the last are generally neglected, the former must be more strictly observed; it being otherwise impious, that our devotion having a narrower *channel*, should also carry a shallower stream.

Tim. What other means must I use for expedition of comfort to my wounded conscience?

Phil. Confess* that sin or sins, which most perplexes thee, to some godly minister, who by absolution may pronounce, and apply pardon unto thee.

Tim. This confession is but a device of Divines, thereby to screw themselves into other men's secrets, so to mould, and manage them with more ease to their own profit.

Phil. God forbid they should have any other design, but your safety, and therefore choose your confessor, where you please, to your own contentment; so that you may find

* 2. Sam. xii. 13. Mat. iii. 6.

ease, fetch it where you may, it is not our credit, but your cure we stand upon.

Tim. *But such confession hath been counted rather a rack for sound, than a remedy for wounded consciences.*

Phil. It proves so, as abused in the *Romish Church*, requiring an enumeration of all mortal sins, therein supposing an error, that some sins are not mortal, and imposing an impossibility, that all can be reckoned up. Thus the *conscience* is tortured, because it can never tread firmly, feeling no bottom, being still uncertain of confession, (and so of absolution) whether or no he hath acknowledged all his sins. But where this ordinance is commanded as convenient, not commanded as necessary, left free, not forced in cases of extremity, sovereign use may be made, and hath been found thereof, neither *magistrate* nor *minister* carrying the sword or the keys in vain.

Tim. *But Sir, I expected some rare inventions from you, for curing wounded consciences: whereas all your receipts hitherto are old, stale, usual, common, and ordinary; there is nothing new in any of them.*

Phil. I answer, first, if a *wounded conscience* had been a *new disease*, never heard of in God's *word* before this time, then perchance we must have been forced to find out new remedies. But it is an *old malady*, and therefore *old physic* is best applied unto it. Secondly, the *receipts* indeed are old, because prescribed by him, who is the * *antient of days*. But the older the better, because warranted by experience to be effectual. God's ordinances are like the *clothes* † of the *children of Israel*, during our wandering in the wilderness of this world, they never wax old, so as to have their virtue in operation abated or decayed. Thirdly, whereas you call them *common*, would to God they were so, and as generally practised, as they are usually prescribed. Lastly, know we meddle not with *curious heads*, which are pleased with new-fangled rarities, but with *wounded consciences*, who love solid comfort. Suppose our *receipts* ordinary and obvious; If * *Naaman* counts the cure too cheap and easy, none will

* Dan. vii. 9. † Deu. xxix. 5.

‡ 2. Kings v. 12.

pity him if still he be pained with his leprosy.

Tim. But your receipts are too loose and large, not fitted and appropriated to my malady alone. For all these, (pray, read, keep good company, be diligent in thy calling, observe the Sabbath, confess thy sins, &c.) may as well be prescribed to one guilty of presumption, as to me ready to DESPAIR.

Phil. It doth not follow that our physic is not proper for one, because it may be profitable for both.

Tim. But despair and presumption being contrary diseases flowing from contrary causes, must have contrary cures.

Phil. Though they flow immediately from contrary causes, yet originally from the common fountain of natural corruption: and therefore such means as I have propounded, tending towards the mortifying of our corrupt nature, may generally, though not equally be useful to humble the presuming, and comfort the despairing; but to cut off cavils in the next dialogue, we will come closely to peculiar counsels unto thee.

DIALOGUE XIII.

Four wholesome Counsels, for a wounded Conscience to practice.

Tim. Perform your promise, which is the first counsel you commend unto me?

Phil. Take heed of ever renouncing thy filial interest in God, though thy sins deserve that he should disclaim his paternal relation to thee. The prodigal * returning to his father did not say, *I am not thy son, but, I am no more worthy to be called thy son.* Beware of bastardizing thyself, being as much as Satan desires, and more than he hopes to obtain. Otherwise thy folly would give him more than his fury could get.

Tim. I conceive this a needful caution.

Phil. It will appear so if we consider, what the * Apostle saith, that we wrestle with principalities and powers. Now wrestlers in the olympian games were naked, and

* Luke xv. 21. † Ephes. vi. 12.

anointed with oil to make them sleek and glibbery, so to afford no hold-fast to such as strove with them. Let us not gratify the Devil with this advantage against ourselves, at any time to disclaim our *son-ship* in God : if the Devil catches us at this lock, he will throw us flat, and hazard the breaking of our necks with final despair. Oh no ! still keep this point ; a *prodigal son* I am, but a *son, no bastard* : a *lost sheep*, but a *sheep, no goat* : an *unprofitable servant*, but *God's servant*, and not an absolute *slave to satan*.

Tim. Proceed to your second counsel.

Phil. Give credit to what grave and godly persons conceive of thy condition, rather than what thy own fear, (an incompetent judge) may suggest unto thee. A seared conscience thinks better of itself, a wounded ~~se~~, than it ought : the former may account sin a sport, the latter all sport a sin : such holy men, when sick, are ready to set any cold to be the *cough of the lungs*, an ordinary *Pustle*, no less than the ~~ague~~ sore. So wounded consciences con-

sive mity to be of presumption,

sins of *ignorance* to be of *knowledge*, apprehending their case more dangerous than it is indeed.

Tim. But it seems unreasonable that *I* should rather trust another saying, then my own sense of myself.

Phil. Every man is best judge of his *ownself*, but during the swoon of a *wounded conscience*, I deny thee to be come to *thy ownself*: whilst thine eyes are blubbering, and a tear hangs before thy sight, thou canst not see things clearly and truly, because looking through a double *medium* of air and water; so whilst this cloud of *pensiveness* is pendant before the eyes of thy soul, thine estate is erroneously represented unto thee.

Tim. What is your third counsel?

Phil. In thy agony of a *troubled conscience* always look upwards unto a gracious God to keep thy soul steady, for looking downward on thyself thou shalt find nothing but what will increase thy fear, infinite sins, good deeds few, and imperfect: it is not thy faith, but God's faithfulness thou must rely upon; casting thine eyes downwards on thy-

self to behold the great distance betwixt what thou deservest, and what thou desirest, is enough to make thee giddy, stagger and reel into despair : Ever therefore *Lift up thine eyes unto the* hills, from whence cometh thy help*, never viewing the deep dale of thy own unworthiness, but to abate thy pride when tempted to presumption.

Tim. Sir, your fourth and last counsel.

Phil. Be not disheartened as if comfort would not come at all, because it comes not all at once, but patiently attend God's leisure : they are not styled the swift, but the^t *sure mercies of David*: and the same prophet says, ‡ *the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward*, this we know comes up last to secure and make good all the rest : be assured, where grace patiently leads the *front*, glory at last will be in the *rear*. Remember the prodigious patience of *Eliah's servant*.

Tim. Wherein was it remarkable ?

Phil. In obedience to his master : he went several times to the sea ; it is tedious for me to tell what was not troublesome for him

* *Psalm cxxi. 1.* † *Isaiah. lv. 3 and lviii. 8.*

‡ *1 Kings xviii. 43*

to do, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, times sent down steep *carmel*, with danger, and up it again with difficulty, and all to bring news of nothing, till his last journey, which made recompense for all the rest, with the tidings of a cloud arising. So thy thirsty soul, long parched with drought for want of comfort, though late, at last, shall be plentifully refreshed with the *dew* of consolation.

Tim. *I shall be happy if I find it so.*

Phil. Consider the causes why a broken leg is incurable in a horse, and easily curable in a man: the horse is incapable of counsel to submit himself to the farrier, and therefore in case his leg be set, he flings, flounces, and flies out, unjointing it again by his mis-employed mettle, counting all binding to be shackles and fetters unto him; whereas a man willingly resigns himself to be ordered by the *surgeon*, preferring rather to be a prisoner for some days, than a cripple all his life. *Be not like a *horse or mule, which have no understanding;* but let patience have its perfect work in thee. When God goes about to

* Psalm xxxii. 9.

bind up the broken hearted, tarry his time,
though ease come not at an instant, yea though
it be painful for the present, in due time thou
shalt certainly receive comfort.*

DIALOGUE XIV.

*Comfortable meditations for wounded con-
sciences to muse upon.*

Tim. *Furnish me I pray with some com-
fortable meditations; whereon I may busy
and employ my soul when alone.*

Phil. First consider that our Saviour had not only a notional, but an experimental and meritorious knowledge of the pains of a wounded conscience when hanging on the Cross: If Paul conceived himself happy being to answer for himself, before King Agrippa, especially because he knew him to be expert in all the customs and questions of the jews: how much more just cause has thy

+ James i. 3. Isa. lxi. 1.

wounded conscience of comfort and joy, being in thy prayers to plead before *Christ* himself, who hath felt thy pain, and deserved that in due time by his stripes thou shouldest be healed ?

Tim. Proceed I pray in this comfortable subject.

Phil. Secondly, consider that herein, like *Elijah*, thou needest not complain that thou art left alone, seeing the best of God's saints in all ages have smarted in the same kind : instance in *David* : indeed sometimes he boasts how *he lay in green* pastures, and was led by still waters* ; but after he bemoans that *he sinks in deep †mire, where there was no standing*. What is become of those *green pastures* ? parched up with the *drought*. Where are those *still waters* ? troubled with the tempest of affliction. The same *David* compares himself to an *‡owl*, and in the next *Psalm* resembles himself to an *eagle*. Do two *fowls* fly of more different kind ? The one the *scorn*, the other the *sovereign* ; the

* Psalm xxiii. 2. † Psalm lxix. 2.

‡ Compare Psalm cii. 6. with Psalm cii. 5.

one the *slowest*, the other the *swiftest*; the one the most *sharp-sighted*, the other the most *dim-eyed* of all *birds*. Wonder not, then, to find in thyself sudden and strange alterations. It fared thus with all God's *servants*, in their agonies of temptation, and be confident thereof, though now run aground, with grief, in due time thou shalt be all afloat with comfort.

Tim. *I am loath to interrupt you in so welcome a discourse.*

Phil. Thirdly, consider, that thou hast had, though not grace enough to cure thee, yet enough to keep thee, and conclude that he whose goodness hath so long held thy head above water from drowning, will at last bring thy whole body safely to the shore. The *wife of Manoah* had more *faith* than her *husband*, and thus *she* reasoned: * *If the Lord was pleased to kill us he would not have received a burnt and a meat offering at our hands.* Thou mayst argue in like manner: if God had intended finally to forsake me, he would never so often have heard and accepted my

* *Judg. xiii. 23.*

prayers, in such a measure as to vouchsafe unto me, though not full deliverance from, free preservation in my affliction. Know *God hath done great things for thee already*, and thou may'st conclude from his grace of supportation hitherto, grace of ease, and relaxation hereafter.

Tim. It is pity to disturb you, proceed.

Phil. Fourthly, consider, that besides the private stock of thy own, thou tradest on the public store of all good men's prayers, put up to heaven for thee. What a mixture of *Languages met in Jerusalem at Pentecost,* Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, &c.* But conceive to thy comfort, what a medley of prayers, in several tongues, daily center themselves in God's ears in thy behalf, *English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, &c.* insomuch, that perchance thou dost not understand one syllable of their prayers, by whom thou mayst reap benefit.

Tim. Is it not requisite to entitle me to the profits of other men's prayers, that I

* Acts ii.

particularly know their persons which pray for me?

Phil. Not at all, no more than it is needful that the eye or face must see the backward parts, which is difficult, or the inward parts of the body, which is impossible ; without which sight, by sympathy they serve one another. And such is the correspondency by prayers, betwixt the mystical members of Christ's body, corporally unseen one by another.

Tim. Proceed to a fifth meditation.

Phil. Consider, there be five kinds of consciences on foot in the world : first, an ignorant conscience, which neither sees nor saith any thing, neither beholds the sins in a soul, nor reproves them. Secondly, the flattering conscience, whose speech is worse than silence itself, which, though seeing sin, sooths men in the committing thereof. Thirdly, the seared conscience, which hath neither sight, speech, nor sense, in men that are * past feeling. Fourthly, a wounded conscience, frightened

* Ephes. iv. 19.

with sin. The last and best, is a *quiet*, and *clear conscience*, pacified in *Christ Jesus*. Of these, the fourth is thy case, incomparably better than the three former, so that a wise man would not take a world to change with them. Yea, a *wounded conscience* is rather painful than sinful, an affliction, no offence, and is in the ready way, at the next remove, to be turned into a *quiet conscience*.

Tim. *I hearken unto you with attention and comfort.*

Phil. Lastly, consider the good effects of a wounded conscience, privative for the present, and positive for the future. First, privative, this heaviness of thy heart (for the time being) is a bridle to thy soul, keeping it from many sins it would otherwise commit. Thou that now sittest sad in thy shop, or walkest pensive in thy parlour, or standest sighing in thy chamber, or liest sobbing on thy bed; mightest perchance at the same time be drunk, or wanton, or worse, if not restrained by this affliction. God saith in his prophet to *Judah*, * *I will hedge thy way with thorns*, namely, to keep

* Hos. ii. 6.

Judah from committing spiritual fornication. It is confess that a wounded conscience, for the time, is a hedge of thorns, (as the messenger of Satan, sent to buffet St. Paul, is termed a * *thorn in the flesh.*) But this thorny fence keeps our wild spirits in the true way, which otherwise would be straggling : and it is better to be held in the right road with briars and brambles, than to wander on beds of roses, in a wrong path, which leads to destruction.

Tim. What are the positive benefits of a wounded conscience ?

Phil. Thereby the graces in thy soul will be proved, approved, improved. Oh, how clear will thy sun-shine be, when this cloud is blown over ? and here I can hardly hold from envying thy happiness hereafter. O that I might have thy future crown, without thy present cross ! thy triumphs, without thy trial ; thy conquest, without thy combat ! But I recall my wish, as impossible, seeing what God hath joined together, no man can put asunder. These things are so twisted together, I must have both or neither.

DIALOGUE XV.

That is not always the greatest sin wherof a man is guilty, wherewith his conscience is most pained for the present.

Tim. *Is that the greatest sin in a man's soul, wherewith his wounded conscience, in the agony thereof, is most perplexed?*

Phil. It is so commonly, but not constantly. Commonly indeed, that sin most pains and pinches him, which commands as principal in his soul.

Tim. *Have all men's hearts some one paramount sin, which rules as sovereign over all the rest?*

Phil. Most have. Yet as all countries are not *Monarchies*, governed by *Kings*, but some by *free-states*, where many together have equal power; so it is possible (though rare) that one man may have two, three, or more sins, which jointly domineer in his heart, without any discernible superiority betwixt them.

Tim. Which are the sins that most generally wound and afflict a man, when his conscience is terrified?

Phil. No general rule can exactly be given herein. Sometimes that sin, in acting whereof he took most delight, it being just, that the sweetness of his corporal pleasure, should be sauced with more spiritual sadness. Sometimes that sin, which (though not the foulest) is the most frequent in him. Thus his idle words may perplex him more, than his oaths or perjury itself. Sometimes that sin (not which is most odious before God,) but most scandalous before men, does most afflict him, because drawing greatest disgrace upon his person and profession. Sometimes that sin which he last committed, because all the circumstances ther eof, are still firm and fresh in his memory. Sometimes that sin, which (though long since by him committed) he hath heard very lately powerfully reproved; and no wonder, if an old gall new rubbed over, smart the most. Sometimes that sin which formerly he most slighted and neglected, as so inconsiderably small, that it was unwor-

thy of any sorrow for it, and yet now it may prove the sharpest sting in his conscience.

Tim. *May one who is guilty of very great sins, sometimes have his conscience much troubled only for a small one?*

Phil. Yes verily : country patients often complain, not of the disease which is most dangerous, but most conspicuous. Yea, sometimes they are more troubled with the symptom of a disease (suppose an ill colour, bad breath, weak stomach) than with the disease itself. So in the soul, the conscience oft-times is most wounded, nor with that offence which is, but appears most, and a sin incomparably small to others, whereof the party is guilty, may most molest for the present, and that for three reasons.

Tim. *Reckon them in order.*

Phil. First, that God may shew in him, that as sins are like the sands in number, so they are far above them in heaviness, whereof the least crum taken asunder, and laid on the conscience, by God's hand, in full weight thereof, is enough to drive it to despair.

Tim. *What is the second reason?*

Phil. To manifest God's justice, that those should be chastised with a *great-sin*, who have swallowed many *small-sins*, without the least regret. Thus some may be terrified for not fasting on Friday, because indeed they have been drunk on Saturday : they may be perplexed for their wanton dreams, when sleeping, because they were never truly humbled for their wicked deeds, when waking. Yea, those who never feared *Babylon the great*, may be frightened with *little Zoar* ; I mean, such as have been faulty in flat superstition, may be tortured for committing or omitting a thing, in its own nature indifferent.

Tim. What is the third reason ?

Phil. That this pain for a lesser sin may occasion his serious scrutiny into greater offences. Any paltry *cur* may serve to start and put up the *game* out of the bushes, whilst fiercer, and fleeter *hounds* are behind to course and catch it. God doth make use of a smaller sin, to raise and rouse the *conscience* out of security, and *to put it up*, as we say, to be *chased*, by the reserve of far

greater offences, *lurking behind* in the soul, unseen, and unsorrowed for.

Tim. *May not the conscience be troubled at that, which in very deed is no sin at all, nor hath truly so much, as but the appearance of evil in it?*

Phil. It may. Through the error of the understanding, such a mistake may follow in the conscience.

Tim. *What is to be done in such a case?*

Phil. The parties judgment must be rectified, before his conscience can be pacified. Then is it the wisest way to persuade him to lay the *axe* of repentance to the *root* of corruption in his heart. When real sins in his soul are felled by unfeigned sorrow, causeless scruples will fall of themselves. Till that root be cut down, not only the least *bough*, and *branch* of that *tree*, but the smallest *sprig*, *twig*, and *leaf* thereof, yea the very empty shadow of a *leaf* (mistaken for a sin, and created a fault by the jealousy of a misinformed judgment) is sufficient intolerably to torture a *wounded conscience*.

DIALOGUE XVI.

Obstructions hindering the speedy flowing of comfort into a troubled soul.

Tim. How comes it to pass, that comfort is so long a coming to some wounded consciences?

Phil. It proceeds from several causes, either from God, not yet pleased to give it; or the patient, not yet prepared to receive it; or the minister, not well fitted to deliver it.

Tim. How from God not yet pleased to give it?

Phil. His time to bestow consolation is not yet come: now no plumbets of the heaviest human importunity can so weigh down God's *clock of time*, as to make it strike one minute before his hour be come. Till then, his mother herself could not prevail with * Christ to work a *miracle*, and turn *water* into *wine*: and till that minute appointed approach, God will not in a *wounded conscience* convert the

* John ii. 4,

water of affliction into that *wine of comfort*, which makes glad the heart of the soul.

Tim. *How may the hindrance be in the patient himself?*

Phil. He may as yet not be sufficiently humbled, or else God perchance in his providence fore-sees, that as the *prodigal child*, when he had received his *portion*, riotously mispent it: so this *sick soul*, if comfort were imparted unto him, would prove an unthrif~~t~~ and ill husband upon it, would lose and lavish it. God therefore conceives it most for his glory, and the others good, to keep the comfort still in his own hand, till the *wounded conscience* get more wisdom to manage and employ it.

Tim. *May not the sick man's too mean opinion of the minister, be a cause why he reaps no more comfort by his counsel?*

Phil. It may. Perchance the sick man hath formerly slighted and neglected that minister, and God will now not make him the instrument for his comfort, who before had been the object of his contempt. But on the other side, we must also know, that perchance

the party's over-high opinion of the minister's parts, piety, and corporal presence, (as if he cured where he came, and carried ease with him) may hinder the operation of his advice. For God grows jealous of so suspicious an instrument, who probably may be mistaken for the principal. Whereas a meaner man, of whose spirituality the patient hath not so high carnal conceits, may prove more effectual in comforting, because not within the compass of suspicion to eclipse God of his glory.

Tim. How may the obstructions be in the minister himself?

Phil. If he comes unprepared by prayer, or possessed with pride, or unskilful in what he undertakes; wherefore in such cases, a minister may do well to reflect on himself, (as the * *disciples* did when they could not cast out the devil) and to call his heart to account, what may be the cause thereof: particularly whether some unrepented for sin in himself hath not hindered the effects of his counsel in others.

Tim. However, you would not have him wholly disheartened with his ill success.

Phil. Oh no ; but let him comfort himself with these considerations. First, that though the patient gets no benefit by him, he may gain experience by the patient, thereby being enabled more effectually to proceed with some other in the same disease. Secondly, Though the sick man refuses comfort for the present, yet what doth not sink on a sudden, may soak in by degrees, and may prove profitable afterwards. Thirdly, his unsucceeding pains may notwithstanding facilitate comfort for another to work in the same body, as *Solomon* built a temple with most materials formerly provided, and brought thither by *David*. Lastly, grant his pains altogether lost on the *wounded conscience*, yet his * *labour is not in vain in the Lord*, who without respect to the event, will reward his endeavours.

Tim. But what if this minister hath been the means to cast this sick man down, and now cannot comfort him again ?

* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Phil. In such a case, he must make this sad accident the more matter for his humiliation, but not for his detection. Besides, he is bound, both in honour and honesty, civility and christianity, to procure what he cannot perform, calling in the advice of others more able to assist him, not conceiving out of pride or envy, that the discreet craving of the help of others, is a disgraceful confessing of his own weakness: like those malicious midwives, who had rather that the woman in travail should miscarry, than be safely delivered by the hand of another, more skillful than themselves.

DIALOGUE XVII.

What is to be conceived of their final estate who die in a wounded Conscience without any visible Comfort.

Tim. *What think you of such, who yield up their ghost in the agony of an afflicted*

spirit, without receiving the least sensible degree of comfort?

Phil. Let me be your remembrancer to call or keep in your mind, what I said before, that our discourse only concerns the children of God: this notion renewed I answer. It is possible that the sick soul may receive secret solace, though the standers by do not perceive it. We know how insensibly Satan may spirit and inject despair into a heart, and shall we not allow the Lord of heaven to be more dexterous and active with his antidotes than the devil is with his poisons?

Tim. Surely if he had any such comfort, he would shew it by words, signs, or some way, were it only but to comfort his sad kindred, and content such sorrowful friends which survive him; were there any hidden fire of consolation kindled in his heart, it would sparkle in his looks and gestures, especially seeing no obligation of secrecy is imposed on him, as on the * blind man, when healed, to tell none thereof.

Phil. It may be he cannot discover the

* Mar. viii. 26.

comfort he hath received, and that for two reasons: First, because it comes so late, when he lies in the *meshes* of life and death, being so weak, that he can neither speak, nor make signs with *Zechariah*, being at that very instant, *when the silter cord is ready to be loosed, and the golden bowl to be broken, and the pitcher to be broken at the fountain, and the wheel to be broken at the cistern.*

Tim. What may be the other reason?

Phil. Because the comfort itself may be incommunicable in its own nature, which the party can take, and not tell; enjoy, and not express; receive, and not impart: as by the assistance of God's spirit, he sent up * *groans which cannot be uttered*, so the same may from God be returned with comfort, which cannot be uttered; and as he had many invisible and privy pangs, concealed from the cognizance of others, so may God give him secret comfort, known unto himself alone, without any other men's sharing in the notice thereof.

The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

* Rom. viii. 26.

† Prov. xiv. 10.

*So that his comfort may be compared to the new name given to God's servants, * which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it.*

Tim. All this proceeds on what is possible or probable, but amounts to no certainty.

Phil. Well, then, suppose the worst, this is most sure, though he die without tasting of any comfort here, he may instantly partake of everlasting joys hereafter. Surely many a despairing soul, groaning out his last breath with fear and thought to sink down to hell, hath presently been countermanded by God's goodness to eternal happiness.

Tim. What you say herein, no man alive can confirm or confute, as being known to God alone, and the soul of the party. Only I must confess, that you have charity on your side.

Phil. I have more than charity, namely, God's plain and positive promise, + blessed are such as mourn, for they shall be comforted. Now though the particular time, when, be not expressed, yet the latest date that can be allowed, must be in the world to

* Rev. ii. 17.

+ Mat. v. 4.

come, where such mourners, who have not felt God in his comfort here, shall see him in his glory in Heaven.

Tim. But some who have led pious and godly lives, have departed, pronouncing the sentence of condemnation upon themselves, having one foot already in hell by their own confession.

Phil. Such confessions are of no validity, wherein their fear bears false witness against their faith. The fineness of the whole cloth of their life, must not be thought the worse, for a little course *list* at the last. And also their final estate is not to be construed by what was dark, doubtful, and desperate at their deaths, but must be expounded, by what was plain, clear, and comfortable, in their lives.

Tim. You then are confident, that a holy life, must have a happy death.

Phil. Most confident. The *Logicians* hold, that, although from false premises a true conclusion may sometimes follow; yet from true propositions, nothing but a * truth

* *Ex veris postunt, nil nisi vera sequit.*

can be thence inferred, so though sometimes a bad life may be attended with a good death, (namely, by reason of repentance, though slow, sincere, though late, yet unfeigned, being seasonably interposed) but where a godly and gracious life hath gone before, there a good death must of necessity follow; which, though sometimes doleful (for want of apparent comfort) to their surviving friends, can never be dangerous to the party deceased. Remember what S. Paul saith, * *Our life is hid with Christ in God.*

Tim. *What makes that place to your purpose?*

Phil. Exceeding much. Five cordial observations are couched therein. First, that God sets a high price, and valuation on the souls of his servants, in that he is pleased to hide them: none will hide toys, and trifles, but what is counted a treasure. Secondly, the word *hide*, as a relative imports, that some seek after our souls, being none other than Satan himself, *that roaring lion, who goes about + SEEKING, whom he may devour.*

* Col. iii. 3.

+ 1 Peter v. 8.

But the best is, let him *seek*, and *seek*, and *seek*, till his malice be weary, (if that be possible) we cannot be hurt by him, whilst we are *hid in God*. Thirdly, grant *Satan* find us there, he cannot fetch us thence : *our souls are bound in the bundle of life, with the Lord our God*. So that, be it spoken with reverence, God first must be stormed with force or fraud, before the soul* of a saint sinner, *hid in him*, can be surprized. Fourthly, we see the reason, why so many are at a loss, in the agony of a *wounded conscience*, concerning their spiritual estate. For they look for their life in a wrong place, namely to find it in their own piety, purity, and inherent righteousness. But though they seek, and search, and dig, and dive never so deep, all in vain. For though *Adam's* life was hid in himself, and he intrusted with the keeping his own integrity, yet, since Christ's coming, all the original evidences of our salvation are kept a higher office, namely, *hidden in God myself*. Lastly, as our *English proverb* *he that hath hid, can find*; so God (to longs the * issues from death) can

infallibly find out that soul that is hidden in him, though it may seem, when dying, even to labour to lose itself in a fit of despair.

Tim. *It is pity, but that so comfortable a doctrine should be true.*

Phil. It is most true : surely as * *Joseph* and *Mary* conceived, that they had lost *Christ* in a crowd, and sought him three days sorrowing, till at last they found him beyond their expectation, safe and sound, sitting in the *temple*: so many pensive parents solicitous for the souls of their children, have even given them for gone, and lamented them lost (because dying without visible comfort) and yet, in due time, shall find them to their joy and comfort, safely possessed of honour and happiness, in the *midst of the heavenly temple*, and *church triumphant in glory*.

† Luke ii. 48.

DIALOGUE XVIII.

*Of the different time and manner of the coming
of comfort to such who are healed of
a wounded conscience.*

Tim. *How long may a servant of God
lie under the burden of a wounded con-
science?*

Phil. * *It is not for us to know the times
and the seasons, which the Father hath put
in his own power.* God alone knows whether
their grief shall be measured unto them, by
hours, or days, or weeks, or months, or many
years.

Tim. *How then is it that Saint Paul saith,
that God will give us *the issue with the
temptation, if one may long be visited with
this malady?*

Phil. The apostle is not so to be under-
stood, as if the temptation and issue were
twins, both borne at the same instant; for
then no affliction could last long, but must be

* Acts i. 7. Cor. x. 13.

ended as soon as it is begun ; whereas we *read how *Aneas truly pious*, was bedridden of the palsy eight years ; the woman diseased with a *bloody issue twelye years ; another woman bowed by infirmitie* eighteen years ; and the man *lame thirty eight years at the pool of Bethesda.

Tim. What then is the meaning of the Apostle ?

Phil. God will give the issue with the temptation, that is, the temptation and the issue bear both the same date in God's decreeing them, though not in his applying them : at the same time, wherein he resolved his servants shall be tempted, he also concluded of the means and manner, how the same persons should infallibly be delivered. Or thus : God will give the issue with the temptation ; that is, as certainly, though not as suddenly. Though they go not abreast, yet they are joined successively, like two links in a chain, where one ends the other begins. Besides there is a two-fold issue ; one, through

* Acts ix. 33. † Mat. ix. 2. ‡ Luke xiii. 11.

§ John v. 5.

a *temptation*; another, out of a *temptation*. The former is but mediate, not final; an *issue* to an *issue*, only supporting the person tempted for the present, and preserving him for a future full deliverance. Understand the *apostle* thus, and the *issue* is always both given and applied to God's children, with the *temptation*, though the temptation may last long after, before fully removed.

Tim. *I perceive then, that in some, a wounded conscience may continue many years.*

Phil. So it may. I read of a poor *widow*, in the land of * *Limburgh*, who had nine children, and for thirteen years together was miserably afflicted in mind, only because she had attended the dressing and feeding of her little ones, before going to *mass*. At last it pleased God, to sanctify the endeavours of *Franciscus Junius*, that learned godly *divine*, that upon true information of her judgment, she was presently and perfectly comforted.

Tim. *Doth God give ease to all in such manner, on a sudden?*

* *Melchior Adamus invita Theologorum Extororum,*
page 193.

Phil. O no : some suddenly receive comfort, and in an instant they pass from *mid-night* to bright day, without any dawning betwixt. Others receive consolation by degrees, which is not poured, but dropt into them by little and little.

Tim. Strange, that God's dealing herein should be so different with his servants.

Phil. It is to shew, that as in his proceedings there is *no* * *variableness*, such as may import him mutable or impotent, so in the same there is very much variety, to prove the fulness of his power, and freedom of his pleasure.

Tim. Why doth not God give them consolation all at once ?

Phil. The more to employ their prayers, and exercise their patience. One may admire why † *Boaz* did not give to *Ruth* a quantity of corn more or less, so sending her home to her mother, but that rather he kept her still to glean ; but this was the reason, because that is the best charity, which so relieves another's poverty, as still continues

* Jam. i. 17.

† Ruth. ii. 8.

their industry. God in like manner, will not give some consolation all at once, he will not spoil their (painful but) pious profession of gleanings; still they must pray and gather, and pray and glean, here an ear, there a handful of comfort, which God scatters in favour unto them.

Tim. What must the party do when he perceives God and his comfort beginning to draw nigh unto him?

Phil. As * *Martha*, when she heard that *Christ* was coming, staid not a minute at home, but went out of her house to meet him; so must a sick soul, when consolation is a coming, haste out of himself, and hie to entertain God with his thankfulness. The best way to make a *Homer* of eomfort increase to an *Ephah*, (which is ten * times as much) is to be heartily grateful for what one hath already, that his store may be multiplied. He shall never want more, who is thankful for, and thrifty with a little: whereas ingratitude doth not only stop the flowing of more mercy, but even spills what was formerly received.

* Joh. xi. 20.

† Exo. xvi. 36.

DIALOGUE XIX.

How such who are completely cured of a wounded conscience, are to demean themselves.

Tim. Give me leave now to take upon me
the person of one recovered out of a wounded
conscience.

Phil. In the first place, I must heartily congratulate thy happy condition, and must rejoice at thy *upsitting*, whom God hath raised from the bed of despair: welcome *David* out of the *deep*, *Daniel* out of the *lion's den*, *Jonah* from the *whale's belly*: welcome *Job* from the *danghill*, restored to health and wealth again.

Tim. Yea, but when *Job's brethren came* to visit him after his recovery, every one gave him a piece of * money, and an earring of gold: but the present I expect from you, let it be I pray some of your good counsel for my future deportment.

* Job. xlvi. 14.

Phil. I have need to come to thee, and comest thou to me? Fain would I be a *Paul*, sitting at the feet of such a *Gamaliel*, who hath been cured of a *wounded conscience* in the height thereof: I would turn my *tongue* into *ears*, and listen attentively to what tidings he brings from hell itself. Yea, I should be worse than the brethren of *Dives*, if I should not believe one risen from the *dead*, for such in effect I conceive to be his condition.

Tim. But waving these digressions, I pray proceed to give me good advice.

Phil. First, thankfully own God thy principal restorer, and comforter paramount. Remember that of * *ten Lepers*, one only returned to give thanks, which shews, that by nature, without grace over-swaying us, it is ten to one if we be thankful. Omit not also thy thankfulness to good men, not only to such who have been the architects of thy comfort, but even to those, who though they have built nothing, have born burthens towards thy recovery.

Tim. *Go on I pray in your good counsel.*

Phil. Associate thyself with men of afflicted minds, with whom thou mayst expend thy time to thine and their best advantage. O how excellently did *Paul* comply with *Aquila* and *Priscilla*! As their hearts agreed in the general profession of piety, so their hands met in the trade of **tent makers*, they abode and wrought together, being of the same occupation. Thus I count all *wounded consciences* of the same company, and may mutually reap comfort one by another; only here is the difference: they (poor souls) are still bound to their hard task and trade, whilst thou (happy man) hast thy *indentures cancelled*, and being *free* of that *profession*, art able to instruct others therein.

Tim. *What instructions must I commend unto them.*

Phil. Even the same comfort, wherewith thou thyself was + comforted of God: with *David*, tell them what God hath done for thy soul; and with *Peter*, being strong, + strengthen thy brethren: conceive thyself

* Act. xviii. 2.

+ 2 Cor. i. 4.

‡ Luk. xxii. 32.

like Joseph, therefore, sent before, and sold into the Egypt of a wounded conscience, (*where thy feet were hurt in the stocks, the irons entered into thy soul*) that thou mightest provide food for the famine of others, and especially be a purveyor of comfort for those thy brethren, which afterwards shall follow thee down into the same doleful condition.

Tim. *What else must I do for my afflicted brethren?*

Phil. Pray heartily to God in their behalf: when *David* had prayed, *Psalm xxv. 2.* *O my God, I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed;* in the next verse (as if conscious to himself, that his prayers were too restrictive, narrow, and niggardly) he enlarges the bounds thereof, and builds them on a broader bottom; *yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed:* Let charity in thy devotions have *Rechoboth*, room enough: beware of pent petitions confined to thy private good, but extend them to all God's servants, but especially all wounded consciences.

Tim. Must I not also pray for those servants of God, which hitherto have not been wounded in conscience?

Phil. Yes verily, that God would keep them from, or cure them in the exquisite torment thereof. Beggars when they crave an alms, constantly use one main motive, that the person of whom they beg may be preserved from that misery, whereof they themselves have had woeful experience. If they be blind, they cry, *master, God bless your eye sight;* if lame, *God bless your limbs;* if undone by casual burning, *God bless you and your's from fire.* Christ, though his person be now glorified in heaven, yet he is still subject by sympathy of his saints on earth, to hunger, nakedness, imprisonment, and a *wounded conscience,* and so may stand in need of feeding, cloathing, visiting, comforting, and curing. Now when thou prayest to Christ for any favour, it is a good plea to urge, edge, and enforce thy request withal, *Lord grant me such or such a grace, and never mayest thou Lord, in thy mystical members, never be tortured and tormented*

*with the agony of a wounded conscience, in
the deepest distress thereof.*

*Tim. How must I behave myself for the
time to come?*

*Phil. Walk humbly before God, and care-
fully avoid the smallest sin, always remem-
bering * Christ's caution; behold thou art
made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing
come unto thee.*

DIALOGUE XX.

*Whether one Cured of a wounded conscience
be subject to a Relapse.*

*Tim. May a man, once perfectly healed of
a wounded conscience, and for some years in
peaceable possession of comfort, afterwards
fall back into his former disease?*

*Phil. Nothing appears in Scripture or
reason to the contrary, though examples of
real relapses are very rare, because God's*

* Joh. v. 14.

Servants are careful to avoid sin; the cause thereof, and being once burnt therewith; ever after dread the fire of a wounded conscience.

Tim. Why call you it a relapse?

Phil. To distinguish it from those relapses more usual and obvious, whereby such who have snatched comfort, before God gave it them, on serious consideration, that they had usurped that to which they had no right, fall back again into the former pit of despair: this is improperly termed a relapse, as not being a renewing, but a continuing, of their former malady, from which, though seemingly, they were never soundly recovered.

Tim. Is there any intimation in Scripture of the possibility of such a real relapse in God's servants?

Phil. There is; when David saith, Psalm lxxv. 8, *I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his Saints, but let them not turn again to folly:* this imports that if his Saints turn again to folly, which by woeful experience we find too frequently done, God may change his voice, and turn his peace,

formerly spoken, into a warlike defiance to their conscience.

Tim. But this methinks is a diminution to the majesty of God, that a man, once completely cured of a wounded conscience, should again be pained therewith : Let mountebanks palliate, cures break out again, being never soundly, but superficially healed : he that is all in all, never doth his work by halves, so that it shall be undone afterward.

Phil. It is not the same individual wound in number, but the same in kind, and perchance a deeper in degree : Nor is it any ignorance, or falsehood in the surgeon, but folly, and fury in the patient, who by committing fresh sins, causes a new pain in the old place.

Tim. In such relapses men are only troubled for such sins which they have run on score since their last recovery from a wounded conscience.

Phil. Not those alone, but all the sins which they have committed, both before and since their conversion, may be started up afresh in their minds and memories, and

grieve and perplex them, with the guiltiness thereof.

Tim. But those sins were formerly fully forgiven, and the pardon thereof solemnly sealed, and assured unto them ; and can the guilt of the same recoil again upon their consciences ?

Phil. I will not dispute what God may do in the strictness of his justice. Such seals, though still standing firm and fast in themselves, may notwithstanding break off, and fly open in the feeling of the sick soul : he will be ready to conceive with himself, that as * *Shimei*, though once forgiven his railing on *David*, was afterwards executed for the same offence, though upon his committing of a new transgression, following his servants to *Gath*, against the positive command of the king : so God, upon his committing of new trespasses, may justly take occasion to punish all former offences ; yea, in his apprehension, the very foundation of his faith may be shaken, all his former title to heaven brought into question, and he tor-

* 1. Kings ii. 46

mented with the consideration that he will never a true child of God.

Tim. What remedies do you command such souls in relapses?

Phil. Even the self-same receipts which first prescribed to wounded consciences, the very same promises, precepts, comfort counsels, cautions. Only as *Jacob*, the second time that his sons went down into * Egypt, commanded them to carry double money in their hands; so I would advise such to apply the former remedies with double diligence, double watchfulness, double industry, because the malignity of a disease is riveted surer and deeper in a relapse.

* Genesis xliii. 12.

DIALOGUE XXI.

Whether it be lawful to pray for, or to pray against, or to praise God for a wounded conscience,

Tina. Is it lawful for a man to pray to God to visit him with a wounded conscience.

Phil. He may and must pray to have his high and hard heart truly humbled, and bruised with the sight and sense of his sins, and with unfeigned sorrow for the same: but may not explicitly and directly pray for a wounded conscience, in the highest degree and extremity thereof.

Tina. Why interpose you those terms explicitly and directly?

Phil. Because implicitly, and by consequence, one may pray for a wounded conscience: namely, when he submits himself to be disposed by God's pleasure, referring the particulars thereof wholly to his infinite wisdom, tendering, as I may say, a blank paper to God in his prayers, and requesting

him to write therein what particulars he pleases ; therein generally, and by consequence, he may pray for a *wounded conscience*, in case God sees the same for his own glory, and the parties' good ; otherwise, directly he may not pray for it.

Tim. How prove you the same ?

Phil. First, because a *wounded conscience* is a judgment, and one of the sorest, as the resemblance of the torments of hell. Now it is not congruous to nature, or grace, for a man to be a free, and active instrument, purposely to pull down upon himself, the greatest evil that can befall him in this world. Secondly, we have neither direction, nor precedent of any *saint*, recorded in God's word, to justify and warrant such prayers. Lastly, though praying for a *wounded conscience* may seemingly scent of pretended humility, it doth really and rankly savour of pride, limiting *the holy one of Israel*. It ill becoming the patient to prescribe to his heavenly physician what kind of physic he

will minister unto him.

Tim. But we may pray for all means to

increase grace in us, and therefore may pray for a wounded conscience, seeing thereby, at last, piety is improved in God's servants.

Phil. We may pray for and make use of all means whereby grace is increased : Namely, such means as by God are appointed for that purpose ; and therefore, by virtue of God's institution, have both a proportionableness and attendency in order thereunto. But properly, those things are not means, or ordained by God, for the increase of piety, which are only accidentally over-ruled to that end by God's power against the intention and inclination of the things themselves. Such is a *wounded conscience*, being always actually an evil of punishment, and too often occasionally an evil of sin : The *bias* whereof doth bend and bow to wickedness ; though, over-ruled by the aim of God's eye, and *strength of his arm*, it may bring men to the mark of more grace and goodness. God can and will extract *light* out of *darkness*, *good* out of *evil*, *order* out of *confusion*, and *comfort* out of a *wounded conscience*: And

yet darkness, evil, confusion, &c. are not to be prayed for.

Tim. But a wounded conscience, in God's children, infallibly ends in comfort here, or glory hereafter, and therefore is to be desired.

Phil. Though the ultimate end of a wounded conscience winds off in comfort; yet it brings with it many intermediate mischiefs and maladies, especially as managed by human corruption: Namely, dulness in divine service, impatience, taking God's name in vain, despair for the time, blasphemy; which a saint should despise, not desire; shun, not seek; not pursue, but avoid, with his utmost endeavours.

Tim. Is it lawful positively to pray against a wounded conscience?

Phil. It is, as appears from an argument taken from the lesser to the greater. If a man may pray against pinching poverty, as wise * Agur did; then may he much more against a wounded conscience, as a far heavier judgment. Secondly, if God's servants may

pray for ease under their burthens, wherof we see divers particulars in that * worthy prayer of Solomon; I say, if we pray to God to remove a lesser judgment by way of subvention, questionless we may beseech him to deliver us from the great evil of a *wounded conscience*, by way of prevention.

Tim. *May one lawfully praise God for visiting him with a wounded conscience?*

Phil. Yes, verily. First, because it is agreeable to the † will of God, *in every thing to be thankful*: here is a general rule, without limitation. Secondly, because the end, why God makes any work, is his own glory; and a *wounded conscience* being a work of God, he must be glorified in it, especially seeing God shews much mercy therein, as being a punishment on this side of *hell fire*, and less than our deserts. As also, because he hath gracious intentions towards the sick soul for the present, and when the malady is over, the patient shall freely confess, that it is *good for him that he was so afflicted*. Happy then-

* 1 Kings viii. 33.

† 1 Thes. v. 18. Ephes. v. 20. Psalm ciii. 22. and cxlv. 10.

that soul, who in the *lucid intervals* of a wounded conscience, can praise God for the same. *Music* is sweetest near, or over rivers, where the *echo* thereof is best rebounded by the water. Praise for pensiveness, thanks for tears, and blessing God over the floods of affliction, makes the most melodious music in the ear of heaven.

THE
CONCLUSION OF THE AUTHOR
TO THE
R E A D E R.

AND now God knows how soon it may be said unto me, *physician heal thyself*, and how quickly I shall stand in need of these counsels, which I have prescribed to others. Herein I say with *Eli* to * *Samuel*, *it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good:* with † *David* to *Zadock*, *behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.* With the ‡ *Disciples* to *Paul*, *the will of the Lord be done:* But oh how easy it is for the mouth to pronounce, or the hand to subscribe these words ! But how hard, yea, without God's grace, how impossible, for the heart to submit thereunto ! Only hereof I am confident, that the making of this *treatise*, shall no ways cause or hasten a *wounded con-*

* 1 Sam. iii. 18, † 2 Sam. xv. 26. ‡ Acts xxi. 14.

science in me, but rather on the contrary (especially if as it is written *by* me, it were written *in* me) either prevent it, that it come not at all, or defer it that it come not so soon; or lighten it, that it fall not so heavy, or shorten it, that it last not so long. And if God shall be pleased hereafter to write * *bitter things against me*, who have here written the sweetest comforts I could for others, let none insult on my sorrows: But whilst my wounded conscience shall lie like the f cripple, at the porch of the temple, may such as pass by be pleased to pity me, and permit this book to beg in my behalf the charitable prayers of well disposed people; till divine providence shall send some Peter, some pious minister, perfectly to restore my maimed soul to her former soundness. Amen.

* Job xiii. 28.

† Actv iii. 2.

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